

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

THE STORY OF TRANSLATION

[IS RESERVED.]

No. 572.—VOL. XXII.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING APRIL 18, 1874.

[PRICE ONE PENNY]



[THE BARON'S GALLANTRY.]

ADRIEN LEROY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Maurice Durant," "Fickle Fortune," etc., etc.

CHAPTER V.

The butterfly the ancient Grecians made
The soul's fair emblem, and its only name—
But of the soul, escaped the slavish trade
Of mortal life! For in this earthly frame
Ours is the reptile's lot, much toil, much blame,
Manifold motions making little speed,
And to deform and kill the things whereon we
feed.

Coleridge.

THERE was a grand ball at Lady Merivale's, and at twelve o'clock the countess, surrounded by a cordon of notabilities, might have been considered in the height of her glory.

But she was not, for amongst the handsome faces of her petite court she missed one, handsomer than them all.

Eveline, Countess of Merivale, was a beautiful woman, one of the leaders of fashion, ambitious, with one great object in life, and that was to ensnare and retain as attendant cavalier the monarch of society, Adrien Leroy.

Lord Merivale, Earl of Conybeare, was held in the light of a useful appendage by his beautiful countess, an encumbrance—slightly tiresome but inevitable—to the great Conybeare diamonds.

He was fond of his farm, detested society, loved his shortbuns and—though a courteous gentleman and every inch an English peer—was rather bored than not by his charming wife.

Certainly Eveline Merivale did not love her lord, and, as certainly, if the truth must be told, she did not love Adrien Leroy; but then it was the saucy piquante to her brilliant existence to fancy and make believe that she did.

It was an amusement to correspond in cipher with the languid, aristocratic Apollo. It gave a charm and a dash of ecstasy to the otherwise monotonous luxury of existence to plan meetings with him at the houses of convenient relatives, beneath the shades of Briery Park Beeches, in Louis Quatorze rooms at Richmond, and to dawdle through

summer afternoons exchanging Tennysonisms and diluted Owen-Meredithisms with the almond-eyed, golden-haired son of the house of Barminster. Not for the world would her ladyship raise a scandal; she loved her diamonds—that was certain—far better than she loved her attendant cavalier, she prized her position as Countess Conybeare even above the little illicit meetings, flirtings and De Mussetisms.

Vanity was at the bottom of it no doubt, for it was a grand thing and a mighty to drag the godlike Adrien through the brilliant ranks of fashion at her chariot wheels.

So that at twelve o'clock, though the smile was serenely placid upon the low white forehead and ripe, parted lips, Eveline Merivale was impatient and anxious at heart, and beneath the heavy folds of her thick dove-coloured satin the little, white-shod feet were beating a restless tattoo.

The saloons were hot, though not crowded, for the countess knew better than to spoil the pleasure of two hundred by the addition of a third.

The glorious band was sending a delicious stream of melody from the music gallery; the silks, satins and jewels were glimmering and flickering in the mazes of the deux-tentes.

The band of courtiers wavered, changed, passed away, and their places round the countess were as quickly filled up.

Half-past twelve, and she grew more impatient, the tattoo quickened with the music, the dark, lustrous eyes shone not angrily—that would be bad breeding—but a trifle less serene.

"The countess looks riled," said a waltzer as he passed with his partner on his arm.

"Riled! what a word," replied the lady, gathering her white silk round her.

"And yet how descriptive and true a one," retorted Mortimer Shelton. "Riled is the word, and riled is the feeling. See how she smiles at little Lord Hatley; she wishes him any where, I know. Strange, when you ladies are savage, you should take such pains to hide it."

The lady laughed—she was a bright little brunette, flushed with the dance and thoroughly happy.

"Why should we wear our hearts upon our sleeves

for such daws as the Honourable Mr. Shelton to peck at? Our little art of dissembling is all we possess, you know. And so you think the countess looks angry. So she does; but how beautiful she is!"

"Marvellous," said the cynic, adding as his partner, Lady Chetwold, of Chetwold Park, looked up. "Marvellous that one woman should praise another's looks."

"Greater marvel still when men shall give us credit for a little justice and mutual charity. But tell me—you know everything—is Mr. Leroy to be here to-night?"

"I should soon lose my character for omniscience if I professed knowledge of Adrien's movements, Lady Chetwold. He was to have been here to-night, but whether he will be is quite another matter. Perhaps Lady Merivale is as uncertain as I am, and that may explain the sweetness of the smile which I see has at last extinguished poor little Hatley."

"You are very dreadful," laughed her bright little ladyship, fanning herself. "I am almost afraid of you, Mr. Shelton. Cynics are so wicked."

"And women love wickedness," said Mortimer, stifling a yawn behind his white hand. "The prince is here to-night. Have you seen him?"

"Yes," said Lady Chetwold. "I have him down for the next—if he remembers it; he is always so forgetful."

"Put not your trust in princes, you know," laughed Mortimer. "And if his highness do not claim you—which I am certain he will do, or I should not offer—will you give it to me?"

"No, certainly not," was the quick retort. "Cæsar aut nullus."

"Cæsar or nothing! Very well," laughed Mortimer. "Here he comes, surrounded of course."

Then as his highness came to claim his partner the Honourable Mortimer, with exquisite languor, delivered her up, adding as he did so:

"Here comes one greater even than Cæsar—look!"

Lady Chetwold followed the direction of his eyes and saw that all heads were turned towards the silken-hung entrance.

An indescribable hum or buzz, followed by the half beat of silence that always precedes great men or great events, ran through the room; then, as the silks and satins parted a little Adrien Leroy was seen advancing up the polished, mirror-like floor.

A slight flush, too slight to be noticed, lit up the face of the countess as, making straight for the hostess, the man of the day came leisurely through the throng.

Well worthy of the homage so fully paid him he looked.

Adrien's beauty was of a high order—of birth and blood as well as feature. There was nobility blended with the grace; patrician was stamped on the grand, haughty face and proclaimed itself in the perfectly moulded limbs.

Put him in a carter's smock, thrust a whip in the long, white, shapely hand, and he would seem a king in robe of samite with a sceptre in grasp.

To-night Norgate had pushed back the heavy golden-bronze hair from the white forehead, had set priceless pearls in the wrists and snowy shirt-front, had with marvellous nicety circled the column-like neck with a loose, graceful collar and tied the thick band of lawn in a massive knot under the throat.

A greater than Cæsar, certes, for this king needed no court, nothing could elevate or lower him. He was the idol of society, the absolute ruler of fashion. "That is he!"

"An Oriental beauty, and yet so English, so massive," muttered a Spanish ambassador.

"Ay, those limbs are built like steel, monseigneur, and I have seen that thin, lady-hand break down the guard of François Desailot himself," responded an English diplomat.

With serene, bland calm, utterly unconscious, or at least utterly indifferent to the attention and admiration that accompanied his every step, Adrien Leroy bent over the countess's hand with his kingly courtesy, murmuring in his clear, musical tones his greeting; then turned to shake hands with the prince, who, as profound an admirer of the popular idol as the lesser lights, had passed to exchange a word before the dance commenced.

Adrien sank into the velvet lounge beside the countess.

"You do not scold me, belle reine," he said, in his low, soft voice, "and yet I could lay the blame on other shoulders. I have been dining with Pomfret, the Duke and Vignard at the club. You know Vignard's dinners—simply perfection. Pomfret was in the best possible form and escape was impossible. But now I am here at last have you scolded me a dance?"

"You do not deserve one," she said, looking down upon him, all her impatience and irritation melting beneath the magic of his smile and the music of his voice.

"It is the one great mercy, ma belle," he retorted, "that one does not get one's deserts in this world."

She gave him the programme with a half-sigh. "I saved you the next," she said, "foolish as ever."

"Gracious and sweet as ever," he said. "How should my rose be otherwise?"

She looked before her dreamily, letting the soft phrase go and pass unheeded.

"You have been to Barmister?" she said, presently.

He nodded and settled himself more comfortably. "Yes," he said.

"The baron sees more of his darling now," she said. "I thought filial affection never ran very hotly in the Leroy blood."

"Nor does it," he said, with a low laugh. "Business, my dear Eveline, odious business, into which Jasper persistently enveigles me."

"I thought Mr. Jasper Vermont was the new machine through which all your business troubles were manipulated."

"So thought I," he said. "But one must turn the handle even of machines. There are signatures and other forms which must be gone through, at least Jasper says so."

"And how is the baron?" she said.

"Well," he replied.

"And Lady Constance?" she said, with the slightest dash of cold restraint in her voice.

"Also well," he replied, nodding to a man who entered.

"She is staying at the Castle, I suppose?" said the countess, with an indifference almost too marked.

"Yes," he replied, absently; then added, "You do not ask after King Cole."

"Ah, Mo. He shares the general good health, I trust?"

"Yes," he said, with a smile.

"He will win, you still think?" she said.

"Oh, yes," he replied. "Vermont says there is nothing in the field worthy to be named with him."

The countess raised her eyebrows, and examined the miniatures on her fan.

"This Mr. Vermont seems a wonderful man. You trust him in matters of business and the stable. A connoisseur of wine, thoroughbred, and a master of précis and legalities; a wonderful man!"

"Yes," he said, with his low laugh, "Jasper is a wonderful fellow. Jasper has brains. Nothing comes amiss to him. With half the worry he wrestles with daily I should be in my grave. He is an invaluable friend and the gods have been kind in bestowing him on me."

The countess looked straight before her but said nothing.

"Come," said he, as the first bars of a Strauss waltz floated from the gallery, and, with a sigh of enjoyment, she rose for the waltz she had reserved for him.

"No one has my step like you," she breathed, when they paused for rest. "Adrien, shall I back King Cole for another thousand?"

The two sentences were rather incongruous, but they were curiously characteristic of her ladyship. The love of intrigue and a well-bred, pretty little partiality for making money by a little betting on the turf and speculation in the money-market, both "sub-rosa," of course, were the two principal traits of the countess's character.

"Oh, yes," he said, as they started again. "Jasper has put two thousand more of mine on to-day. And there he is," he added, as the sleek, carefully-dressed figure of Mr. Vermont entered the saloon.

Mr. Vermont did not dance. He was one of those men whom you could not imagine as threading the mazes of a cotillon or swimming in circles to three-four time.

But though Mr. Jasper Vermont could not dance he was always welcome in every ball-room.

The great ones of May Fair would as soon have thought of omitting the great name of Adrien Leroy from their invitation lists as that of his friend Mr. Jasper Vermont.

Whatever the hour, however mixed the company, Mr. Vermont had always a smile, a jest, or a new and piquant scandal.

In the smoking-room he would rival Metimer Shelton in good-natured cynicism. In a dapper duchess's boudoir he would favour the five o'clock tea with the neatest bon-mot and the spiciest demolition of her grace's nearest friend.

Nothing came amiss to him, as Adrien Leroy had once said, in his indolent, graceful way—he was a universal genius, a cyclopedia of the arts and sciences, cool of head, strong of hand and ready of wit.

To the last quality some of the insolent aristocrats could bear witness, for with all Mr. Jasper Vermont's amiable smile, he could, recent, smiling still, an impertinence, and deal back a tongue-stroke with the sharpest word-fencer.

To-night he was at the countess's ball for no purpose apparently but to enjoy the bright colours of the scene and the gaiety of the atmosphere. His sharp little eyes were like pretty snakes behind their heavy lids, his little fat hands clasped each other behind his back in a mutual caress of confidence, and his thick neck wagged his smooth head and face to the rhythm of the music, as if hands, neck and face thoroughly enjoyed it.

Mortimer Shelton came upon him thus, and muttered: "Vishnu glowing over the destined victims!" to his neighbour.

But Mr. Jasper did not hear him or if he did he took no notice, and smiled on till the passers-by seemed bathed in the effulgence of his universal benediction.

The small hours came on and the carriages crashed and crowded in the streets and squares around the house, that looked like a huge lantern with the light streaming in great glaring floods through the huge windows.

In the crush Leroy, with the Marchioness of Engleton on his arm, came against Mr. Jasper Vermont.

"The brougham is at the corner. Supper at St. James's, you remember?"

Leroy nodded.

"Ah, yes, very well," and they were parted again.

"The Marchioness of Engleton's carriage!" shouted the groom of the hall, and through the long line of footmen, towering in his graceful height a foot above the titled aristocratic throng, Adrien Leroy steered the marchioness to the carriage, stood bareheaded until it had moved on, and then, nodding languid good nights to the shower of farewells that were eagerly bestowed on him, strolled to the corner, where his night-brougham stood waiting.

Mr. Jasper Vermont, who always managed to penetrate the densest crowd—owing to the oil in his composition, Montague Shelton said—was already at the door, looking at the horses, and fumbling for his cigar-case.

Adrien Leroy stood for a moment, with his hands thrust into the pockets of his white beaver overcoat, looking at the struggling crowd, a smile of half-contemptuous, half-puzzled amusement on his noble face.

"Look, Jasper," he said, nodding, with a curl of the lip that was more weary than scornful. "Look at them. It is hard work. And they call it pleasure—live and die for a few hours nightly in a crowded, poisoned room, and a hand-to-hand struggle in the dark and mire of the streets afterwards. Pleasure! And there's no prophet to rise and proclaim it madness!"

"No," laughed Mr. Jasper. "Prophets know better. We should stone them, as we always have done, ever since this exquisite conglomeration of folly, 'the world,' was set rolling. Prophets! We should not profit by them, I fancy!"

Adrien Leroy laughed.

"Your alchemy is a potent one, Jasper mine. It turns all things to jest," he said, stepping into the brougham.

"The truest metal of the world's word coinage, after all," said Mr. Vermont. "Everything goes down before it—states, dynasties, and a woman's reputation."

The splendid horses—a recent purchase of their lordly master—pawed, reared and plunged, then sped away, their iron-plated hoofs striking the round stones as if in scorn of all things earthly, and the two moralists on the vanity of the fair were driven to a fresh booth.

Then, when the carriage was lost in the darkness, and swallowed up by innumerable others rolling in the same direction, from out the shadows of the tall stone pillars of the Countess's mansion stepped the little figure of a girl.

In the glare of the salon lights she looked as beautiful as an Egyptian lotus flower—her dark olive skin shining in that rich, dusky tint; her large, deep eyes fixed fawn-like upon the tiny, twinkling lamps of the departing vehicle.

She smiled.

The lips half parted seemed to breathe a prayer or a blessing in their tremulous movement, and the hand—small and well formed—was pressed against the shapely, graceful bosom with firmness of restraint.

"How beautiful he is!" she murmured, lost to all sound—the crowd near her, and lights beating upon her. "How beautiful, and how good! Oh, if I could follow him—to hear him!"

She turned with a sigh, and found herself face to face with a small group of men, fresh from the heat of the ball-room, and thirsty for some fresh excitement.

"Ah, pretty one?" exclaimed one of them. "Alone and star-gazing. Come, here are mortals thirsting for a glimpse of those dark eyes."

He seized her arm—not ungently, but with the playful cruelty of a pleasure-hunter, and drew her to him.

"Dark eyes, indeed—queen of night," he added, as, heedless of her struggles, he drew her out of the shadow into a patch of light. "A Cleopatra, with the addition of god-like youth. Estcourt, what a prize! Will you give me a kiss, pretty one?"

Almost before the question had left his lips she raised her white, muscular arm and struck him across the throat.

So sudden, so unexpected was the blow that he loosened his grasp on her arm.

She snatched herself free and darted like a swallow into the gloom.

Pursuit was useless, and the persecutor, with a puzzled and amused laugh, rejoined his friends.

Meanwhile the night brougham had set down the two friends at the house in St. James's.

There was a supper at Haidée's, and a room full of beautiful women, stars of the theatrical and Terpsichorean and operatic hemisphere, were waiting for them.

The darkness gave way to gray dawn, and still the rovelry flow on.

Flashes of song flavoured the wine that poured out like water, bright scintillations of wit sharpened the shouts of laughter and woke prolonged applause from white, jewelled hands.

The goddess of pleasure was being fêted by her youthful worshippers, and here, amidst the devotees at the very shrine, none was a more eager votary than Adrien Leroy.

See him as he stood with a golden goblet of sparkling Rhine in his right hand, his left toyed with the golden tresses of a Spanish beauty, his eyes sparkling to their utmost depths with the elixir of pleasure, his lips opened to thrill out in the deep music of his voice the chorus to a song chanted by a bird-throated prima donna—

Ah, while the wine is sweet in the cup
And the stars are bright above,
Care in a kiss is swallowed up
And drowned in a draught of love!

See him thus in the brightness and glory of his youth, and, bowing to the splendour of his grace and strength—to the majesty of his light, untrammelled heart, look no farther; for perchance in the background, unseen by the flashing eyes of the revellers, there glins darkly and threateningly a shadow with widespread wings of deathlike hue and a face that

bears a strong resemblance to the fiend or—Mr. Jasper Vermont.

CHAPTER VI.

These modern men and days that seem
So strange to me, remembering
Those that passed when this gray head
Bore youth upon its crest.

HIGH up in the woods of Buckinghamshire stood stately Barminster—so old that one-half its long-stretched pile had decayed to picturesque ruin; so young in the hearts of the people that the chubby village boys would smile at their fathers' knees when they spoke of the castle; so grand in its deep-toned, majestic red, relieved by the sparkling, innumerable diamond-latticed windows, that the great marble palace of the American millionaire that glared bombastically at the sun half a dozen miles off looked hugely ugly and hideously vulgar.

To say that the Leroy were proud of their ancestral home would be to use the wrong expression. There had been Leroy since William the Robber had struck sparks from British flint with his mailed heel, and Barminster Castle was the natural adjunct to the ancient glory of the house. If the Leroy were proud of anything it was the love and reverence of their people, who in picturesque, far-away dotted villages and hamlets surrounded the castle as naturally and fondly as did the woods.

The forefathers of the Barminster peasants followed the Baron Leroy's ancestors to the wars, and shed their blood as liberally as the cascade in the wood poured out its water. In these piping times of peace the sons of the loyal people followed still, with reverent looks, affectionate interest, and the watchful, guardful love which would have sprung into defiant faithfulness if a Leroy had but nodded towards the tattered standard in the banquet-hall and called them to his side.

"God, King and Leroy!" had been the fearless battle-cry of the faithful folk when the Martyr King had struggled with the Puritan cropheds, and the cry was not yet forgotten; the hearts that learnt it glowed still warm in the present generation.

Yet Baron Leroy, present Lord of Barminster, had done nothing to keep the flame of loyalty alight in the hearts of the people. He was a stern, austere, haughty, unyielding old man—tall, thin, white-bearded and hawk-eyed. If he loved a single human being, so vast was his pride, so fierce his scorn for what he would have termed plebeian weakness, that with natural facility he concealed the fact. If he smiled—there were some who had been about his person who had never seen the stern, knotted brow relax—it was but in mockery of some weakness or foible in others. If the outerness of his speech softened or grew less harsh, it was but to sharpen the dart of merciless sarcasm.

His attendants and members of his retinue—for the servants at Barminster amounted in number to, and seemed in appearance, owing to their claret liveries, the army of a small German principality—feared and dreaded, while they loved him.

His friends were cautious in his presence, and never mentioned his name without a slight hesitation, as much of respect as fear, for the baron's great virtue was justice, in the sacred cause of which his dearest bosom-friend—had he possessed one—would have been sacrificed unhesitatingly.

There were many who remembered the fearful, merciless punishment dealt out to many an unthinking parvenu who had dared to affront the Lord Barminster.

In France his bright rapier was ever ready to his iron wrist, in England the heavy-thighed whip never failed as instrument of his wrath when chastisement was required from him for some slight or wrong he had received, or fancied he had received, at another's hand.

The law, mighty as it is, still failed to enmesh the singular baron, for he had a way, a happy knack of punishing or killing so completely that the victim never escaped with strength enough to obtain redress.

Such was the baron, and to read all we have said of him it were only necessary to look upon the stern aristocratic face and unbending figure, as he strode to and fro the mosaic pavement of the south terrace in the clear brightness of the March morning.

The sun shone full upon the dark velvet of his dressing-gown, and caught with a thousand hues the facets of the priceless diamonds at his white, slender wrists.

At the back of him glittered the stained window of the morning-room. One side thrown open to allow the baron to step out on to the terrace, revealed the elegant luxury of the apartment, on the centre table of which gleamed the silver-gilt breakfast-service, shadowed over by the rising steam from the silver urn.

A bright fire sparkled in the grate, and four Venetian mirrors, dividing the rows of painters' masterpieces, threw back, as if with aristocratic scorn, the wealth and beauty they reflected.

The baron stopped in his stroll, and turned his

dark, flashing eyes on the landscape stretching beneath him. Through the tangled confusion of dark, massive woods there lay a long line of pasture, cut here and there by dark threads that were hedges of formidable height, and divided by a streak of light, glittering silver, which was the dangerous stream that formed the final obstacle in the Barminster steeple course.

All the Leroy had been fond of horses. The Barminster stables had sent many a satin-coated, fire-blooded colt to carry off the gilt vase, and this race-course, which the present baron so carefully kept up had been planned and laid down by the most famous of the Leroy Nimrods.

While he looked at it ponderingly, a light footfall broke the silence, and a hand as light as the footfall rested on his shoulder.

He turned his head with slow hauteur—the Leroy never allowed even the shadow of surprise—and kissed with a kingly, condescending kind of courtesy the long, slender fingers that rested on his velvet.

"So early, Constance?" he said. "Who summoned you from the eyrie?"

"The larks," replied the clear, high-toned voice of a woman, and Lady Constance Tremaine dropped her hand from the old man's shoulder and glided to the marble balustrade on which his own palm rested.

A beautiful woman was Lady Constance—one of the faultlessly faultless faces which the lover in Tennyson's "Maud" half suspected in his mistress—a face that, with a touch of colour, passion, feeling, would have been simply irresistible.

But if the delicately-tinted flesh, the large, almond eyes, the faultless mouth, had been but the cunningly-devised marble of a Michael Angelo it could not have been more calm, more placidly, proudly immoveable.

As they two, old man and young woman, stood side by side in the clear morning light, the resemblance between them was marked.

They were related too, for the Tremaine were something akin to the Leroy; a distant branch of the mighty clan, and the pride which tainted the blood stirred in their veins and inflamed their hearts.

The Tremaine were a poor stock of the great race, and beyond the favours of her mighty relative, proud, beautiful Lady Constance had nothing.

"The larks," she repeated, pointing to the heralds of the morning, as they fluttered high up in the blue azure. "Whether to call them friends or foes I know not, for, though song is sweet, sleep is sweet also, and assuredly they rob me of the latter."

She spoke in the low, subdued tones of her class, with the exact modulation prescribed by refinement, but the voice though perfectly musical, lacked that feeling which alone can make it grateful to the heart and ear.

"What care the larks for you?" said the baron, curtly. "They are, like their masters, selfish to the core, so that they get their meed of sleep, the Lady Constances of the world may roll with tired and unsatisfied lids. But, larks or no larks, you look fresh and bright this morning, Constance, and—base alloy to the compliment—are hungry, no doubt."

"Fairly so," she replied, still looking out on the landscape, a family one to her. "Breakfast is waiting. Lady Penelope will take hers in solitude this morning."

The baron inclined his head.

"So much for muffled Emillion. Did I not warn her? Strong stomachs may venture where Lady Penelope's feeble digestion should falter."

Lady Constance smiled.

"Aunt's headache is no worse than usual, so the claret has little to answer for, my lord. How bright the course looks this morning!"

"Ay," he said, grimly. "Like all things that are dangerous, it is sweet to the eye. I loathe that fresh strip of green, the grave of many a Leroy's best hope. The turf has been a fatal snare for our race, girl."

She nodded and her eyelids drooped a little.

"And yet you keep it so carefully."

"As a man will treasure the poison or the weapon which has slain his sire. Ay, let what will happen the death-ride must have its dressing and its due attention. See where that pollard droops over the dark line of the brook?"

And he pointed with his long, thin hand to a corner of the course.

"Yes," she said, quietly.

"A Leroy—Francis, Lord of Thamescroft, bled to death at its feet. See there at the bend—Geoffrey Leroy, in a sterner chase, fell by a crophed's halbert. And there, where the mound rises by the Hawthorn, the brightest of my father's brothers broke his neck. Do you wonder that the emerald of the turf turns crimson in my sight at times, or that the solitude of the plain is filled by fancy with a skeleton host who rides helter-skelter for the poison cup of death? Bah, these are the mad shadows of a dolt!"

He broke off suddenly and turned to the open window.

"Adrien comes to-day," he said, curtly, standing aside and motioning her through with a gesture of

the hand that was more a command than a courtesy.

"To-day?" repeated Lady Constance, passing into the room. "I thought the race was to-morrow and that he would not arrive until then."

"The race is to-morrow. He comes to-day," said the baron, sinking into his carved chair, upon the back of which the Leroy arms blazed in the sunlight. "I knew it not till this morning, when a messenger brought a note from him, saying that we should see him at dinner."

"Is that all he writes?" asked Lady Constance, filling the dainty Sevres cup and passing it to him—the baron and his niece dispensed with the attendants when breakfasting alone—it pleased him to be waited on by her white hands and noiseless movements.

"What should he say?" he asked, grimly. "Nothing," she replied, instantly, "save of his horse."

The baron remained silent for a moment, his eyes fixed on the painted window.

"Of his horse or his friend," continued Lady Constance, lifting her dark eyes to his face, "Mr. Jasper Vermont accompanies him, my lord?"

The baron's face darkened and his thin lips shut tightly.

"Ay," he said. "In the old times a Leroy kept his stewards and bailiffs at arm's length, and was not hail-fellow-well-met with every adventurer. Now the days are changed, and with the steam-engine over our fields and blackening our woods, we lower ourselves to clasp the dingy hand of a nameless club wail as friend and equal. Yes, he comes with him, and we shall gloat the gods with the spectacle of a Leroy feasting side by side, beneath the torn standard of the Martyr, under the very roof which sheltered our king, with a plebeian snob whose cunning brains stand him in the place of blood, whose effrontery is the password which admits him to his master's table."

Low and bitter the invective syllables rolled out and Lady Constance's eyes scintillated with a sudden, momentary light as she heard them.

"It is strange this liking Adrien has taken for his steward, or whatever he may call him; it is unaccountable," she said, in the even, musical tones with which she would so calmly deal out praise. "He is clever, perhaps."

"Your rogue's only virtue," said the baron.

"Amusing," suggested Lady Constance.

"An adventurer's principal stock in trade," was the curt response.

"And manages Adrien's business matters so admirably."

"A sharp sleight of hand, as like as not. But be it as it will, let it rest. We Leroy keep our hands from each other's eyes though the beams may blind. Not mine the task to call my son a fool or strip the mask from his adventurer-friend's false face. Let it go. Whomsoever a Leroy bids to Barminster, I, the lord of it, will welcome. If Adrien chooses to warm adders at his hearth, his care they do not turn and sting. Enough. Give me some more coffee, and leave the fellow's name in silence, for, by the Heaven above, I loathe it!"

None disobeyed the baron, even by a look, and with lowered lids the Lady Constance refilled his cup and bore it to his chair.

As she did so his sharp eyes caught the glitter of a bright piece of needlework across the chair from which she had risen, and, with a curt gesture in its direction, he said:

"What is that?"

She took it up and opened it out for him.

It was a silk jacket with crimson and white stripes; Lady Constance had worked every stitch and blazoned in silver flagrees the Leroy coat-of-arms upon the breast.

"Hem!" he said "a pretty piece of foolery. He rides in it?"

"For the Grand Military," she said. "Do you think it pretty?"

"As a macaw in the sunlight," he said, grimly, and then bent his eyes upon her questioningly. "You worked it for him, girl?"

She inclined her stately head.

"Yes," she replied, with a half-smile.

He rose, and, setting his cup down, strode to the window.

"You are not displeased that he should wear my colours, my lord?" she said, going to him and touching his arm.

"Whose else, girl?" he said, turning haughtily upon her. "Whose else but his bride-elect's? You were plighted in your cradles. Leroy and Tremaine are no unequal match. Make his jacket, girl, and—with the soft, cruel smile which spared none—"win the heart it will cover if you can."

(To be continued.)

LITERARY MEMBERS OF THE NEW CABINET.—The new Ministry contains a fair representation of literature in its ranks. It is all but fifty years (1825) since

the Premier published his first work, "Vivian Grey." He has published about a dozen novels since, besides a "Life of Lord George Bentinck," a "Vindication of the English Constitution," and a "Revolutionary Epic." Mr. Cross has written a work on "The Practice of Quarter Sessions." Lord Derby, as Lord Rector of Glasgow University, has delivered an address which has been published. Lord Carnarvon is the author of a work on "The Druses of Mount Lebanon," and of some historical and antiquarian lectures. Lord Salisbury's articles in the "Quarterly Review" were famous, and equally trenchant were those which appeared in the brilliant but short-lived "Bentley's Quarterly." The Chancellor of the Exchequer has written "Twenty Years of Financial Policy," which has been scanned a good deal during the last few days by those persons who are anxious to anticipate his first budget. Like Sir Stafford Northcote, Lord Malmesbury has also written one book, or rather edited it—viz., the "Diaries and Correspondence" of his grandfather. Next to Mr. Disraeli himself, Lord John Manners has written most books. Five-and-thirty years ago, being just of age, he published "Notes of an Irish Tour," and two years later (1841) he issued "England's Trust, and other poems," and in 1850, "English Ballads." Since then, true to the "Young England" fancies of his youth, he has published "A Plea for National Holidays," "A Cruise in Scotch Waters," and other works. His lordship is a pleasing and elegant writer.

WHEN FAR AWAY.

When far away from thee, my love,
When lonely hours and days shall come—
When all around, about, above,
Is shadowed in dark, silent gloom—
Then turn to memory's page and read
The language of the heart sincere;
Ay, read in earnestness, and heed
The thoughts thou'lt find recorded there.

Turn o'er the pages of life's scroll,
Unfold the mysteries of the past,
And see if aught thou didst enrol
That was too beautiful to last.
If love's young dream is sweet as when
Together we were wont to be,
If thou canst trace in golden lines
The hopes that now seem bright to thee,

If, fraught with tenderness and faith,
The months glide slowly, one by one,
If, in thy heart, thou cherishest
Sweet thoughts of love, then still
hope on;
Despair not, though the time seem long,
For after clouds the sunshine's ray;
And brighter hours to us will come,
For I'll not stray from thee away.

W. H.

KID GLOVES.

I SUPPOSE there is no one who is accustomed to wearing them who will not acknowledge that kid gloves are among the most expensive, troublesome, aggravating, unreliable articles which appertain to the toilet. They are really a weight on the mind of those who desire to dress well, and are the greatest stumbling-block to strict economy.

Of course, one may say, we need not wear them, but what else is offered? The hideousness of cotton, the horrible discomfort of Lisle thread, and the treacherous pretence of a silk glove!

In moments of despair most people have flown to each of these, but they fly back again as speedily; for not only are they uncomfortable, but they utterly forbid anything like elegance. No one can "look dressed" save in kid gloves.

And yet—oh, how many yet there are!—firstly, there is what I will call their "burstiness." It applies to the glove you give less than usual for, and feel proud of as a bargain. It is like a conjuror's trick. You put it on, probably en route for the opera, and it's not there. There are strips of something once a glove, but no glove. You didn't do it—you didn't pull; it was large enough—too large—but it went. That glove has mortified you more than once, for, despite your vows, you will be tempted by low prices again, and again suffer.

Yes, "burstiness" is a bad quality of kid gloves; but when you get a pair that last, how soon they become dirty. Your strong pair, that showed no treacherous flaw in putting on, turn black in one evening—probably because light-coloured gloves are the strongest, being less affected by the dye, and your strong glove is always light.

But suppose they neither burst, nor, being dark, soil at once, the finger-ends rip, and when you have mended them their elegance is over for ever. Or there is a constitutional coming off of the buttons—nothing in the shape of a button will stay on. The glove is good in other respects, but who can wear a buttonless glove?

Then there is the glove with a short thumb—the glove with a narrow wrist—the glove that cracks. Each has its peculiar discomfort, each is thrown away before its time, and helps along the dreadful list of small expenses. If you keep no accounts you don't know what you spend for kid gloves a year, nor do you dare to think. I suppose that incalculable good could be done with ladies' kid-glove money. But will any lady give up kid gloves?

It seems to be something not to be thought of, not possible. One must at least go to church, to concerts, to weddings, to parties in kid gloves. Ruinous, tormenting, horrible things that they are, we must wear them until we find something better. Will any one invent a substitute? I doubt it. We may travel through the air, or socially converse at the distance of miles, or find a telescope that will give us a glimpse of the inhabitants of the moon—supposing any to exist—we may communicate with the spirits and read the riddles of futurity, but we shall never have anything to take the place of our abominable kid gloves.

M. K. D.

THE AUSTRALIAN FEVER TREE.

A QUESTION of considerable interest was recently discussed at a meeting of the French Academy of Sciences. The subject was the remarkable sanitary influence of the *eucalyptus globulus*, when planted in marshy grounds; and the tree, in brief, it seems, has the curious and valuable power of destroying the malarious element in any atmosphere where it grows.

The species is indigenous to Tasmania, and is known among the colonists by the name of the Tasmanian blue gum tree, on account of its dark bluish tinged leaves. Growing in the valleys and on thickly wooded mountain slopes, it often attains a height of from 180 to 220 feet, with a circumference of trunk of from 32 to 64 feet. The foliage is thin and oddly twisted, surmounting, with a thin crown, the top of the pillar-like stem. The wood exhales an aromatic odour, and, after seasoning, is said to be incorruptible. For this reason it is largely used in the building of piers, vessels, and other structures exposed to the ravages of the weather. It is largely exported.

To the peculiar camphor-like odour of the leaves and the large absorption of water by the roots is doubtless owing the fact of the beneficial influence of the tree. Where it is thickly planted in marshy tracts the subsoil is said to be drained as if by extensive piping.

Miasma ceases, we are told, wherever the eucalyptus flourishes. It has been tried for this purpose at the Cape, and within two or three years completely changed the climatic condition of the unhealthy parts of that colony. Somewhat later its plantation was undertaken on a large scale in various parts of Algiers, situated on the banks of a river, and noted for its extremely pestilential air; about 13,000 eucalypti were planted. In the same year, at the time when the fever season used to set in, not a single case occurred, yet the trees were not more than nine feet high. Since then complete immunity from fever has been maintained. In the neighbourhood of Constantia, it is also stated, was another noted fever spot, covered with marsh water both in winter and summer; in five years the whole ground was dried up by 14,000 of these trees, and farmers and children enjoy excellent health. Throughout Cuba marsh diseases are fast disappearing from all the unhealthy districts where this tree has been introduced. A station house, again, at one end of a railway viaduct in the department of the Var, was so pestilential that the officials could not be kept there longer than a year; forty of the trees were planted, and it is now as healthy as any other place on the line.

Careful experiments have proved that in a medicinal preparation it cures the worst cases of intermittent fever, against which quinine proves powerless. It is also valuable as a disinfectant, and as a dressing for wounds; while more recent investigations point to the fact that it may be rendered of great service in catarrhal affections.

The tree has been acclimatized to a certain extent in the South of France, Algiers, Corsica, Spain, Cuba and Mexico.

THE DANGER OF WET COAL.—People who prefer wetting the winter's store of coal to the dust on putting it in their cellars do not generally know that they are laying up for themselves a store of sore throats and other evils consequent upon the practice. But so it is said to be. Even the fire damp which escapes from coal mines arises from the slow decom-

position of coal at temperatures but little above that of the atmosphere, but under augmented pressure. By wetting a mass of freshly broken coal and putting it into a warm cellar, the mass is heated to such a degree that carburetted and sulphuretted hydrogen are given off for long periods of time, and pervade the whole house. The liability of wet coal to mischievous results under such circumstances may be easily appreciated from the fact that there are several instances on record of the spontaneous combustion of wet coal when stowed in the bunkers or holds of vessels. And from this cause, doubtless, many missing coal-vessels have perished.

WAKEFULNESS.

WHEN persons who do not otherwise appear to be ill suffer from continued wakefulness this is a sure sign of mental exhaustion. When any part of the body is specially exerted, the blood flows in increased quantity to that part. So when there is any stress laid on the brain the head becomes surcharged with blood, as is shown by the flushing of the face. If this condition is long continued the bloodvessels lose the power of contracting.

Then the brain remains in an excited state, even when the mind has no longer any desire to work, and it cannot take its proper rest in sleep. In order to enjoy refreshing sleep it is necessary that the blood be not concentrated in the head, but be diffused equally through all parts of the body. This is probably the reason why a warm bath just before going to bed is so conducive to a good night's repose. It is, however, the best way not to allow the mind to get excited near the hour of rest, but to let it run down gradually, like a clock, in the evening.

There have been some wonderful cases of sleeplessness caused by undue mental exertion. Boerhaave, the Dutch philosopher, tells us that at one time he was so absorbed in a particular study that he did not close his eyes in sleep for six weeks. This seems incredible. A French general asserted that, for a whole year, while engaged in active warfare, he slept but one hour in the twenty-four. These and similar cases are probably exaggerated. We all know how often people are unwilling to admit that they have been asleep, when they have really had a sound nap. The persons mentioned could not have survived such prolonged wakefulness. An attendant of the late Emperor Louis Napoleon, whose nervous system had become deranged, died simply from inability to sleep.

A FRENCH gentleman who was Prefect in a department in which the Prince Imperial was to make his first progress, related recently at Chislehurst that the Emperor sent for him to the Tuilleries, anxiously went over with him all the details of the reception, and said, "I commit my son, then, to you. Take care of him, for I love him, oh! so much."

PRINCE CHARLES THEODORE, brother of the Emperor of Austria and Duke of Bavaria, a widower of a Princess of Saxe-Royale, has been wedded to the third daughter of King Dom Miguel of Portugal, who died in exile at his chateau in Franconia. The first of his daughters, Dona Blanca-Maria de las Neves, is the wife of Don Alfonso, brother of Don Carlos. The second daughter, Dona Maria-Teresa, is married to Archduke Louis, the younger brother of the Emperor of Austria, and their only brother Dom Miguel, Duke of Braganza, is affianced to one of the Archduchesses of Austria.

AN EXCENTRIC PHYSICIAN.—Dr. Crucilhier, who has just died at the age of 80, was a most excellent, charitable, and pious man; of late he only visited patients as old as himself. On one occasion he called on a bed-ridden lady, and while listening to her budget of aches and pains fell fast asleep in the arm-chair; she tried to waken him, but no reply. Getting nervous, she managed to seize a hand-bell, and screamed for aid, when the doctor jumped up, sank on his knees beside the bed, his head buried in the counterpane; in this attitude the servants found him. On rising he apologized to the lady, assuring her he believed he was at mass and heard the bell announcing the elevation of the host, which thus sent him to his knees.

A PANTHECONIC RELIC FOR ROYALTY.—The Queen having expressed a desire to possess a relic from the ruins of the Pantheon, Messrs. Smith and Radermacher have selected a Sikh dagger which has been dug out, which was presented to the Queen. This dagger was taken in battle from its original owner, a Sikh chief, by Sir Gore Ouseley. It was elaborately adorned with gold, but this ornamentation has been destroyed by the action of the fire. It is of the peculiar Sikh construction, having a cross handle and two steel bars which come up each side of the arm when the handle is grasped. It has been placed on a board covered with crimson velvet and surrounded by a handsome gold frame.



JOSEPHINE BEAUVILLIERS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Lady Juliette's Secret," "The Rose of Kendale," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XI.

"Tis a meritorious fair design
To chase injustice with revengeful arms."
Shakespeare.

AFTER a few moments' reverie Mr. Beauvilliers resumed his narrative.

"The next morning a little girl was born, heiress in truth, to the great estates of Stoneleigh Priory. The mere title, and the Devonshire estates alone, were the property of the distant cousin, Mark Woodville. But Constance could not support her claim, or prove her right, and so Mark Woodville came likewise into the estates of Stoneleigh Priory. There was a heavy and handsome jointure settled upon the widow and daughter of the late Sir John; but for Constance there was nothing. How should there be? Although the will of Sir John expressly stated that, in the event of the failure of heirs male in the direct line, the direct heirs female, if any existed, should take possession of the estates of Stoneleigh Priory, valued at thirty thousand a year. Now when Sir John died his son, Sir Miles, came in, of course, to both Yorkshire and Devonshire estates, and title, and his sister, Miss Woodville, lost her chance of succeeding to anything besides the share in her mother's jointure. Sir Miles died, it was falsely supposed, without issue of any kind; but in reality the poor little heiress to thirty thousand a year lay coarsely cradled in the country inn, with her suffering young mother by her side.

"I must tell you that the box containing the property of Constance was not stolen, but was brought safely to the inn next morning.

"Constance Woodville, for that was her real name, recovered slowly from her illness; but when she was again able to rise and to walk about, anybody who had known her in former days would have been amazed at the fearful change which had come over her whole nature. It was not that she was less beautiful, but her beauty had assumed an unearthly, almost an awful type. Her bright complexion had entirely faded; she was now white as marble, only her lips were red as carmine, and they were always wreathed with a sad, fierce, scornful smile. Her large dark eyes had lost their softness; they flashed now with a perpetual wrath. Sometimes they seemed fixed on vacancy, or rather, one could have imagined that Constance Woodville was reading the inscrutable

[THE TRUE AND THE FALSE HEIRESS.]

and fathomless mysteries of the future. She altered the fashion of arranging her abundant black hair. She frizzed it in front into curls, which gave a somewhat masculine air to her fine head; but she allowed her tresses to sweep down in masses to her waist behind. She wore a scarlet scarf across her shoulder, tied in a knot at her waist, and this gave her a very picturesque though wild appearance.

"She continued to live at the village inn for some weeks, and she would carry her child boldly in her arms, walking through the unfrequented country lanes and roads, still with that strange unearthly smile upon her lip. Sometimes she would encounter the Ladies Woodville in their grand carriage; then she would stand aside and hold the child up aloft defiantly, and in their very faces, as it were. All this while she desired above everything to find that certificate which would establish her own claim to respectability, and her child's claim to wealth. It was never found, not even by those who would have destroyed it, had they discovered it. The Woodvilles themselves were most anxious to gain possession of that piece of paper, which, once clutched by the eager hand of Constance, would have given over Stoneleigh Priory to be the possession of a frail and sickly babe, of whom Constance was the mother.

"Sir Mark Woodville, the new baronet, Mrs. Woodville, and Miss Woodville, all offered large rewards to the servants, or indeed to anybody, who should succeed in finding the missing certificate; but it was never—no, never found. Constance had her child christened Marie Josephine Woodville, and she endeavoured to have its birth registered as the daughter of Sir Miles Woodville, Baronet, but in this she did not succeed, and a report was circulated that she was mad. This idea gained ground because Lady Woodville, for so she persisted in calling herself, gave out that she possessed great powers—that she could read the future for others. She said that to remunerate her in some degree for the sufferings of her youth, Heaven had conferred upon her sundry gifts—such gifts, indeed, as mankind is rarely dowered with—and Constance became a woman dreaded and looked on with awe. I cannot account for what I am about to relate to you now, Captain Chatteris. Two centuries and a half ago, old Shakespeare said, that that there were more things under the sun than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

Here Mrs. Beauvilliers broke into a little short laugh.

"When once papa gets upon that subject," she said, satirically, "he runs perfectly riot. I trust Captain Chatteris will accept all that is to follow, making due allowance for the excitement under

which Mr. Beauvilliers labours whenever he relates the story of his wife's birth and youth."

"You were not requested to give your opinion," cried Mr. Beauvilliers, angrily, to his wife. "What I am about to relate requires no apology. Captain Chatteris can accept or reject my statements as he thinks fit."

"Depend upon it I shall not reject them," cried Captain Chatteris. "Your story interests me intensely, and if you are about to relate to me anything out of the common, anything unusual, unlikely, what some would call unnatural and impossible, my interest will only deepen and strengthen—the supernatural has always had a vast interest for me."

"I am very much surprised to hear you say so," said Mrs. Beauvilliers. "Surely men and women of education should be guided by reason and common-sense."

"Exactly so," cried Captain Chatteris. "But how are we finite mortals to fix those bounds of reason and common-sense? Allow me again to remind you of Shakespeare; there are indeed, madam, many more things under the sun than are dreamt of in our poor, puny philosophy. And now, Mr. Beauvilliers, pray continue the history of Constance and her child."

"They went abroad," replied Mr. Beauvilliers; "but before doing so Constance stated openly that she had pronounced a dreadful sentence against the Ladies Woodville, in punishment for their crimes towards herself, and she stated that this sentence would be carried fully into effect before two years were over their heads."

"Oh, papa," cried Mrs. Beauvilliers; "such things are too horrible to be talked of. If your tale be true, this dreadful Constance must have become a witch, one who would have been burnt to death, and would have deserved it too, in the old times."

"Will you cease to interrupt, Mrs. Beauvilliers?" cried the master of the little house, angrily. "I wish now to carry on the history of Constance as far as it is known to me. Constance claimed for herself a supernatural power, and, strange to say, she really seemed to be gifted with it. It might have been only chance that brought things about just as she said they would occur; but, if so, it was a most extraordinary chance. She predicted that Lady Woodville should meet with a violent death, and that Miss Woodville should experience an accident which should cripple her for life, so that she would never be able to marry—to ally herself with those proud houses whose escutcheons she had been so desirous of blinding with her own."

"Constance and her child went to Italy, and in some Italian city, whose name I have forgotten, the

unhappy Lady Woodville set up absolutely as a professor of the occult sciences. She became a fortune-teller, a reader of the stars. Her fame became noised abroad; she actually became rich, practising on the credulity, the fears, the hopes, the nerves, the superstition of mankind. This young woman, aided by her weird yet rare beauty, captivated the hearts of many men, but I have every reason to believe that her character was above suspicion, and her life without reproach.

"She removed from Italy to France. In Paris she gained a great name—she called herself Madame la Comtesse de Grandfleur. She established herself in an elegant hotel. The aristocracy of all nations flocked to her and paid to her fabulous prices for reading their fortunes in the stars. Crowned heads were not above consulting her. These great folks may have professed to laugh, may have said they only came for their own amusement, but the belief in the Countess Grandfleur's powers grew stronger.

"Meanwhile her child grew in strength and beauty, and received a first-rate education. At eighteen the young Josephine, for so her mother called her, was one of the most accomplished and lovely creatures in the splendid French capital. I was at that time a student in Paris. I was heir to a good fortune. My father had a desire that I should follow some profession—he hardly knew what, but it was thought that if I could gain a thorough mastery of the French language, mix in polite and political circles, attend the lectures at the Sorbonne and the College of France, mingle with artists, students and men of letters, I might get a chance of obtaining a high diplomatic appointment. I idled my time and spent a great deal of money, and fell in love with beautiful Josephine, whom I saw first in church, attended only by a French maid. She was romantic, poetic and enthusiastic.

"I obtained an introduction to the Countess de Grandfleur, and I had the audacity to propose to her for the hand of her daughter. My suit was rejected with the most annihilating disdain. I was informed that Josephine was the daughter of an English baronet, and that when a certain certificate was found she would be the possessor of thirty thousand a year. I took my departure, but I carried with me the heart of Josephine. Afterwards she eloped with me; we were married. My Josephine was always a loving and faithful wife, but her terrible mother had pronounced a blighting curse upon us. She said that we should come to such poverty that everything we possessed should fail us save bread and cheese and shelter. Josephine, she said, would never inherit the fortune. She should leave a daughter, and when this daughter arrived at woman's estate the certificate would be found which would reinstate her in position and wealth."

"That part of the prophecy has never been fulfilled," scoffed Mrs. Beauvilliers.

"No," returned her husband, gloomily; "but the first part of it was fulfilled to the letter. I lost all my property through a series of misfortunes; Josephine died when our little girl was twelve years old."

"But you have not told me," said Captain Chatteris, "whether the prophecy was performed in regard to Lady Woodville and Miss Woodville, of Stoneleigh Priory."

"It was fulfilled to the letter," rejoined Mr. Beauvilliers. "Both ladies were thrown out of their carriage. Lady Woodville was killed. Miss Woodville so injured her back that she became a cripple for life. She is now an elderly lady, living at Stoneleigh Priory with the humpbacked young lady who is now in unlawful possession of my Josephine's thirty thousand a year. Sir Mark, the father of that young lady, met with his death, as you know, on New Year's Day, at Grandmother Grant's ball."

"Then what becomes of the title and the Devonshire estates?" asked Captain Chatteris.

"They positively go a begging," returned Mr. Beauvilliers. "For there is no male heir, distant or otherwise. The curse of Constance seems positively to have descended on the Woodvilles. It seems likely, however, that some young gentleman may be induced to marry the heiress, and if he comes of a noble family Government may transfer the title to him."

"There is a chance for you," cried Mrs. Beauvilliers, gaily.

Chatteris shook his head silently, but did not smile. It was late before he left the little house by the canal side.

CHAPTER XII.

To which my soul made answer readily:

"Trust me, in bliss I shall abide

In this great mansion that is built for me,
So royal, rich and wide." *Tennyson.*

MERTON COURT was a splendid old Elizabethan mansion. Many trees in the great park were centuries old. It was a lovely park in summer time, where the fern grew high and the dappled deer browsed, and the silver fish-ponds sparkled in the sun. There were gardens and conservatories, there were

model stables and a model stud. There were model farms upon the estate. Everything at Merton was flourishing.

The noble old house was furnished gorgeously and richly, but without glare and without show. Everything was in perfect taste, from the exquisitely painted ceiling to the artistically painted tapestries; from the great diamond of my lady and the heavy gold family plate to the elegant morning slippers which my lord wore while he sipped his chocolate in the ruby-coloured breakfast-room.

Lady Romilly was very tall, very fair complexioned and very haughty. Each Miss Chatteris was equally tall, fair-complexioned and haughty. It was the most self-possessed and well-conducted household in England. Nothing disturbed the gentle flow of its equanimity. The surface of the family pond was ever glassy and smooth. Hitherto it had never reflected either shadows, clouds or storms. The sky that bent over it was blue, shining and sunny.

It was not a very lively household, it was too orderly and circumspect for rude mirth; and when Captain Chatteris entered this home of his father's he was apt to subdue his voice and tread more softly, for his noble father, his lady mother and his honourable sisters all trod softly and spoke in subdued voices, albeit they held their heads aloft, and looked out of their proud eyes somewhat superciliously upon their fellow creatures.

It was a fortnight now since Chatteris had supped at the white cottage.

It was one bright, frosty morning that the young captain, followed by his orderly, rode briskly up the avenue, and drew rein before the carved porch of his father's house. He gave his horse to his servant, rushed into the hall, and went forward gaily towards the library—a large, long room, furnished in sky-blue satin and ebony, with five great windows opening on the lawn. Family portraits, painted on panels, were here and there let into the walls, which were of ebony like the furniture, embossed and engraved with silver. A splendid carpet of velvet pile, with sky-blue ground and black arabesques covered the polished oak floor. A robin was perched in the low grate.

Outside the sun was making the frost on the lawn sparkle like diamonds.

This room was called the library more as a figure of speech than with any solid meaning regarding the books which it contained, for it was the favourite morning lounging-room of the Ladies Romilly. There were two splendid book-cases, all filled with books bound in gorgeous gilded Morocco, but there were also two pianos, a fine harp, sundry vases, mirrors and graceful nick-nacks.

Captain Chatteris entered gaily. His eldest sister, Adelaide, was knitting, lounging backwards on a satin couch. There was something listless—nay, despondent in her attitude.

Edward started when he perceived it. When she saw him she threw down her knitting, and stood up. This was so unusual a demonstration on the part of the young lady that her brother hastened forward, exclaiming:

"Adelaide, what is it?"

"Oh, Chatteris," she exclaimed—it was the custom in the aristocratic family to address the eldest son by the family surname—"I am so thankful you are come. Papa is in dreadful trouble. Mamma is in bed, distracted."

"Is anybody ill?"

"Worse than that, worse than that, Chatteris. I will not keep you in suspense, but tell you the truth at once. Lord Romilly has been speculating—speculating enormously in great foreign railway shares in China. His name was pledged to the amount of three hundred thousand pounds. Our estates are not worth that sum, and the secretary has absconded with five hundred thousand pounds. Papa is liable. Merton Court will be sold, we are ruined—ruined!"

How bleak and dead the word fell on the ear of Chatteris—ruined.

The satin library and the sunny lawn, my lady's diamonds and my lord's gold plate, all the luxury and gloss and sheen of life were to be swept from his path for ever, and he, with his expensive tastes, was the heir only of beggary. But it was not for himself he sighed. It was for the others, for his proud, delicate sisters and his arrogant mother.

"There is one way of escape," faltered Adelaide.

"All our hope is in you, Chatteris."

"In me?"

"Long before his death," rejoined Adelaide, "Sir Mark Woodville had told papa that it was the greatest wish of his heart that you should marry Miss Woodville."

An expression of repugnance passed over the face of Chatteris.

"I know she is horribly ugly," said the young lady. "She is malicious, she is a vixen; but still, Chatteris, think of what you save us from, and yourself from. There is no heir to the title or Devon-

shire estates, and Sir Mark had such influence with the Government that he had actually made arrangements to have the estates conferred on you. As for the title, you would be Sir Edward Chatteris-Woodville until the death of our father, when you would become Lord Romilly. The Devonshire estates are worth three or four hundred thousand pounds. It would be better to sell them to pay off this debt. Miss Woodville has still thirty thousand a year, and you would retain Merton Court."

"But she would not consent to marry me," cried Captain Chatteris, "ruined as I am."

"Oh, Chatteris, she has consented. I went to her yesterday. I told her everything. That girl adores the dust you walk on. She told me she would forego every farthing she possessed in the world, if only she might live with you in a garret. I never saw anything more frantic than her joy when she heard of your misfortunes. Can you not seek pleasures, distractions, a thousand delightful means of employing time away from home? You will enjoy the full command of her thirty thousand a year, you will—"

"Oh, stop, Adelaide," cried Chatteris. "That thought is more horrible than you can have any idea of. If such a thing ever come about—if I marry Elfrida Woodville, I must tell her beforehand that I do it entirely to save my family from ruin and Merton Court from going to the dogs. She must most distinctly understand that I have not a particle of love for her."

"Even under those circumstances," rejoined Adelaide, "she will accept you; but she will be a jealous wife, and I warn you, Chatteris, to carry on your flirtations away from home."

"The young officer sighed deeply.

"Furtive," he echoed, contemptuously. "What an ignoble life you hold out to me for my future career. Domestic ties will be domestic fetters. The jealous wife who sits brooding at home will never be thought of save with a shudder."

"You are a man of the world, Chatteris," rejoined Adelaide, "and you should not romance like a school-girl of fifteen. It is far better to submit with a good grace to these golden fetters than to put on the ugly, clanking chain of poverty. Chatteris, you will have my father's death to answer for. Mamma will be a raving lunatic before six months are over her head. As for us, your sisters—"

He interrupted her, and seized her arm within his grasp. He was white as death, and he spoke between clenched teeth.

"It shall be done, Adelaide," he said, "I will wear these golden fetters, and become the bond-slave of Elfrida Woodville. Do not speak another word; offer me no advice; keep pity and congratulations alike to yourself. Do not thank me, blame me, or compassionate me; only let me alone. I will go and speak my mind to Elfrida Woodville this very afternoon."

As Chatteris spoke he strode out of the room. A few moments after Adelaide heard the sound of his horse's feet clattering on the frozen avenue. He was riding off to Stoneleigh Priory to speak his mind to the deformed heiress.

CHAPTER XIII.

A saying hard to shape in act
For all the past of time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
Wherever thought has wedded fact.

Tennyson.

It was a ride of five miles from Merton Court to Stoneleigh Priory. All through the bright, bracing morning rode Edward Chatteris—handsome cavalry officer, and heir to Merton Court and title. Many might have envied him, who knew his position, his privileges, his strength of youth and manhood, all the earthly goods and worldly advantages, all the natural graces and intellectual gifts with which Heaven had dowered him; and yet could any man have suffered more intensely than that gallant young gentleman suffered during his ride from Merton Court to Stoneleigh Priory?

He was unaccustomed to pain and trouble, and therefore did he feel it all the more bitterly, even as a healthy and muscular man writhes all the more cruelly in the throes and anguish of the first illness.

Ruined! ruined! Father, mother, and sisters—delicate, proud, fastidious and sensitive—all cast suddenly upon the world's cold charity and contemptuous pity, unless he stretched forth his hand to save them, and it was not by honest labour or brave mental exertion that he might hope to do this. He could not carve a way to fortune suddenly with his bright, glancing sword; there was no field open just then for acts of courage and heroism. Neither could he use his pen, nor engrave his name on the blazing scroll of fame at so short a notice and while goaded by such bitter misfortunes, even though he might feel that the grasp of intellect was his, and

that the fire of world-subduing genius smouldered in his soul.

Arts, arms, literature, all those fields might have been open to him one short twelvemonth back; but he had dallied with his chances, as thousands of others have done, for he was the heir to Romilly and to Merton Court, and he could afford to wait. But now Merton Court was actually the property of a company of speculators, while the title but mocked him with its empty sound. Yes, he must save his father, his mother, his sisters; but his hand is not to grasp the pen or wield the sword, it is to clasp the small dingy palm of the heiress of Stoneleigh Priory, and then, dowered with her wealth, it is to pay off all debts and encumbrances, and to restore peace and plenty to the family at home.

"I would rather chop it off," he said, holding his hand out in the clear, frosty air, "than offer it in marriage to yonder humpbacked woman. But I will not deceive her; she shall know the truth, and if she refuses me, then there is but one alternative—Merton Court must go. I must sell my commission, I must obtain some situation under Government, and I must support my father and mother and sisters as best I can. Now, if I thought she would refuse me, I should feel free and at peace. I should have done my duty, and I should be certain of not seeing her face again."

He continued on his way, and soon the turrets and towers of Stoneleigh Priory came into sight through the naked frosty trees. Soon he neared the avenue gate. In a few moments more his horse's hoofs were clattering along the frost-bound drive, under the leafless entwining branches, and then he entered the home park, and soon he was close to the terrace steps, and the vases and fountain which made so gay a show of blooming flowers and playing waters in the glad days of summer.

The servant came round at once to take his horse, and then he mounted the steps and entered the house. Five minutes more found him awaiting the arrival of Miss Woodville in the gorgeous Stoneleigh drawing-room, which was famed for its magnificence throughout the three counties. All was a glitter of velvet and satin, gold and porcelain, mirrors, precious woods, and ivory. Wealth asserted itself in every article of splendid furniture. The Yorkshire estates and the Devonshire estates testified their existence in the elaborate carvings of the chimney-piece, in the exquisite paintings of the vases, and the golden embroidery of the curtains.

Chatteris leant against the mantelshelf awaiting the arrival of the heiress. She came in softly, dressed in deep mourning, wearing no ornament save a chain of jet and heavy earrings of the same. Her swarthy complexion was not improved by her crape attire. As Chatteris encountered the glance of her squinting black eyes a shudder, almost convulsive, passed through his frame. He may have thought of other eyes—of the dark gray orbs of Josephine; but, recovering himself, he advanced and extended his hand to Miss Woodville. He hardly knew how to address her, but she helped him with a cunning woman's ready tact.

"I know why you have come, Captain Chatteris," she said. "This is not simply a visit of compliment. Your sister was with me yesterday. She told me everything, and to-day she has probably repeated to you our conversation. You are not obliged to 'break' anything to me—to use a conventional phrase. I believe I know everything."

"If I have understood my sister aright, Miss Woodville," rejoined Chatteris, "your conduct is most disinterested—most liberal. I cannot conceive what merit I possess sufficient to entitle me to such unbounded kindness."

In spite of himself, his voice assumed a tone slightly satirical—a little bitter.

"It is not your merit," said the heiress, with spirit. "It is my blind folly. I love you, Edward Chatteris, as woman scarcely ever loved man before! I know that your family is ruined, and I wish to have our Devonshire estates sold to pay your liabilities. My own income of thirty thousand a-year will be entirely at your disposal. Merton Court will remain in the hands of your father as long as he lives. When you come into that property I shall not touch a farthing of it. I am talking to you now as I have instructed my lawyer to talk to you. I am assuming that you are willing, Captain Chatteris, to sell yourself to me for gold. I know you hate me"—the heiress smiled bitterly—"but I love you, and I am willing to try what I can do to eradicate the weed of hatred; and to plant the rose of love in your heart."

She spoke so earnestly, and through her swarthy skin there burnt a flush which made her for the moment look so interesting, almost good-looking, that Chatteris pitied her deeply. He felt grateful, as what man would not, for such disinterested affection? For the first time in his life he regarded

Miss Woodville without that intense repugnance which he had hitherto felt. He even took her hand.

"You are too good, too good, Miss Woodville," he said, and then, remembering his mother and sisters and his father, and all the misery which this lady's wealth would save them from, he began to murmur something about his endeavour to prove by his life his faithfulness and gratitude. He had come there determined to be so plain-spoken to the heiress that his downright bluntness would have amounted almost to insult; but now his natural chivalry towards the sex prevailed, and he forbore to speak those harsh words which he had come there to utter.

"I know you hate me," said the heiress. This time she smiled softly as she spoke, and Chatteris murmured "No."

A little while longer, and the hand of the heiress had stolen into his, and she was looking up pleadingly into his eyes. What could he do under such circumstances? Man is but mortal, and Chatteris, overwrought, filled with pity, a species of gratitude, and feeling, perhaps, besides, that he was doing his duty, and overcoming his repugnance towards the heiress—Chatteris put his arm round her waist, and even pressed his lip to her cheek. The embrace gave the lady unqualified pleasure; but for his part he shrank, and shuddered, and turned cold. Few words passed between them, but those were momentous ones. His word was passed as a man of honour and a gentleman; he had promised to marry Elfrida Woodville, the heiress of Stoneleigh Priory.

He was so honourable, so manly, so chivalrous, that now his word was pledged, no thought or shadow of turning crossed his mind. He felt as irrevocably bound to the heiress, as though he had stood with her before the altar, and sworn to cherish and protect her, until death should part them twain.

Lunch was brought in, and now the look of timidity faded away from the face of the heiress. She had winged her game, she had brought down her bird, she had achieved her conquest, she had gained her end; there was a proud look of possession now in the young lady's face. She assumed at once the tone of a person who has a right to give an opinion, to dictate—nay, to tyrannize. Hot game, jellies, fruit and cakes, sparkling wines, and delicate plates formed the luxurious repast.

It was not yet two months since the death of Sir Mark, and the servants who waited on the young officer and the heiress were dressed in the deepest mourning.

"I choose that we should be alone," said Miss Woodville, when at length the servants were dismissed, and she sat tête-à-tête with Chatteris. "My household consists, you must know, but of very few persons. There is, first, myself; secondly, Miss Woodville; thirdly, Miss Glenmorne, my companion."

"Who is Miss Woodville?" inquired the captain, and his mind was full of the story of Josephine's grandmother, Constance.

"Miss Woodville is an elderly lady, the daughter of Sir John, who was the baronet but one before papa."

"But one," echoed Chatteris, who was resolved to take all this history as news.

"Yes, the baronet immediately preceding papa was a Sir Miles Woodville, son of Sir John, and brother of the lady of whom I have spoken. He met with his death while hunting. Before that, he mixed himself up in a liaison with some good-for-nothing girl, who was companion to Miss Woodville, and after his death this girl actually protested that she was married to him; but she could not prove it."

"The church in which she said she was married was burnt down, and a clergyman who had, she said, united her to Sir Miles was dead. The whole story was preposterously absurd. Miss Woodville—whom you shall see presently, very properly turned her out of the house. She was then herself a young person. Soon after that she met with an accident, broke her hip, and has had to go on crutches ever since. The estate is charged with four thousand a year for her benefit, but at her death it reverts to me. My mother, who died when I was two years old, also left me a fortune of two thousand a year."

While Miss Woodville was relating these family affairs, Chatteris felt the chain which bound him to her galling him more and more. He was compelled to sit and listen to the story of the wrong done to Constance Wyatt, afterwards Lady Woodville, as though he had never heard it before. He was even compelled to simulate sympathy with her persecutors, or at least to suppress his natural indignation, and all the while one thought was awake in his heart. Where was that certificate which would make Josephine Beauvilliers the actual proprietor of Stoneleigh Priory, and of thirty thousand a year? And he—he had pledged himself to try and find that certificate. He

questioned himself as to whether he should be right or wrong in still striving to find that certificate, even though he should be married to Miss Woodville; and he decided that he would be right to try and find it. There was still Merton Court for them both, and his wife would have two thousand a year. Yes, it would not be as though he were reducing his wife to beggary. If the certificate existed, Josephine was the true heiress. He would strive to find it—but how? where? when? It seemed a thing impossible.

"Now let us go and see Miss Woodville," proposed the heiress. "She occupies a suite of rooms in the west wing. I should like her to know the change that has come over my prospects. I always call her my aunt."

Chatteris rose, and followed Miss Woodville through the splendid house to the west wing. They entered an amber drawing-room, where the furniture was of satin and rosewood. A bright fire burned in the grate, and a lady was sitting before it in a carved and cushioned arm-chair. She was knitting a red silk purse. She raised her eyes when Elfrida Woodville approached with her fingers clasped round the arm of Edward Chatteris. The young officer bowed to her, and the lady returned the greeting.

What a hard face it was—what cruel lines about the mouth, and how pitiless the cold stare of the black eyes, that had probably been bright and flashing in the days of youth!

Miss Woodville wore a black satin dress, a large lace collar, fastened by a brooch of garnet surrounded with pearls. Her gray hair was arranged in plaits, fastened in loops down each side of her thin cheeks. She wore a cap with scarlet-coloured ribbons, and she wore a heavy gold chain with an eye-glass attached. She was unmistakably aristocratic and refined—at the same time that she was unmistakably arrogant, hard and merciless.

Captain Chatteris, looking at her, could not but recollect the story which Mr. Beauvilliers had related to him of her cruelty to the hapless Constance, her brother's wife, turned out into the snow just at the most momentous crisis of her life. Yet it was easy to see that a mouth which could smile so pitiless a smile could have pronounced such a dire sentence against the helpless offender.

Elfrida Woodville, standing by the side of her relative, notwithstanding that she had now gained the dearest wish of her heart, and had bound to herself for life a chivalrous and honourable man, Elfrida Woodville, we repeat, looked the very genius and spirit of malignity, with her humpback, her squinting eyes, her low, murderous brow, her sneering mouth. She was young, and her relative was old, but there was not a pin to choose between the amount of repugnance they both excited in the breast of the unhappy Chatteris.

Meanwhile Elfrida was telling her aunt she was engaged to Captain Chatteris, and very triumphantly did she relate the story. Miss Woodville listened and smiled, and then she said, looking straight at Chatteris:

"It will be satisfactory to all parties—to your father, mother, and sisters, to yourself no less than to Elsie."

The captain bowed—it was all he could do to cover his confusion and the fierce, gnawing pain at his heart. And between them those two women seemed to arrange the whole plan of his future life. They forthwith proceeded to map out his existence for him. The heiress grew confident and talkative—and he thought insolent—but he remembered Merton Court, he remembered that his honour was pledged, and he strove to submit and to smile. Miss Woodville said that he was to leave the army. She did not wish to have any of his barrack companions about her house. He was not to go much to London, she had no desire that he should enter parliament, or mingle with men of the world. A quiet country life, she said, she had planned out for him.

Chatteris ground his teeth silently, though his lips bore a stereotyped smile. Had his health been fragile, had there been any tendency to fever in his blood, or to undue excitement in his brain, then he might have hoped that death would come to relieve him; but no, he was strong and muscular, his pulses beat evenly, his blood was pure, his brain was healthy, he had lived temperately and taken exercise, he knew that his constitution was naturally of iron, therefore there was no hope for him that his mental anguish would wear out his life.

No, he must live, and live, and live, until his brown hair became white, and his straight back bent; and during all that time he must submit to the tyranny of that woman who grew every moment more hateful in his eyes.

He spent the day at Stoneleigh Priory. He walked with the heiress through her conservatories; she even put on thick boots and accompanied him to the stable, that she might show him the glory of the Priory stud. All the while she

talked and laughed; her spirits rose in proportion as those of her betrothed grew more depressed. There was no sentiment in this woman—nothing fine. But the blind, devouring passion which she experienced for Chatteris had something tigerish in it; one could not call it love.

They dined at seven at the Priory, and it was not until nine o'clock that Chatteris mounted his horse and rode away towards Merton Court. It had been planned by the heiress and her aunt that the wedding was to take place a twelvemonth from that time.

"A year is a good space," murmured the unhappy young man, as he rode slowly along the frost-bound roads on which the moon was shining. "A thousand things may happen in a year. I may die—she may die. If neither of these events transpire, and if we should be joined together in what we may call in mockery holy matrimony, I think relief must come from somewhere, from north or south, east or west—one of the four winds must bring my release. If in no other way, my mind may give way, and they may shut me in a lunatic asylum—evera that would be infinitely better than this terrible fate which menaces me."

Horrible and blank indeed was the despair which had taken possession of the mind of Chatteris. It was a despair which was likely to have an ill effect upon his character—it would spoil the sunny sweetness of his temper, and warp his notions of right and wrong. Already he found himself contemplating things at which he would have shuddered only the day before.

"If I were dead," murmured Chatteris, "this would not happen. It is one of those cases in which suicide would be justifiable."

And so he rode on under the moonlight, bitterly inveighing against his cruel fate, while the form of the heiress assumed hideous proportions in his mind, and seemed to pursue him with a fiend-like malignity. Stoneleigh Priory appeared to him like the enchanted castle of some wicked ogress. The humpbacked heiress, and the crippled old lady with the cold, cruel eyes, were as evil spirits clothed in bodily form. These two women were henceforth to rule his future destiny. Great Heaven! it was more than he could endure! And now he approached Merton Court, with its conservatories, its well-planted avenues, its gravel paths, its luxurious plate-glass windows, all its appurtenances and surroundings of wealth and luxury and aristocratic taste and refinement. Was there not satisfaction in reflecting that all these comforts and graces would be continued to his parents and his sisters? There was satisfaction, doubtless, but human nature is human nature, and there was bitterness in the thought—bitterness and scorn, and even anger towards those aristocratic sisters and that proud mother and that father whose restless speculation had brought all this misery upon his sensitive and high-souled son.

Chatteris dismounted and rang the bell. His horse was taken round to the stable, and he entered the house. He made his way straight to that blue satin library which was the favourite room of his sisters. All three were there—all three sisters in elegant evening costume. My lord was not to be seen, my lady was still in her chamber, but the honourable sisters in mauve and amber and light-green satin, each costumed in the best colour suited to her complexion, each graceful, each self-possessed, each hiding her deep anxiety under well-bred smiles, rose up to welcome the soldier brother.

He closed the door and advanced straight to the fireplace. There was no smile upon his handsome mouth, the dark eyes were full of gloom. Approaching the marble mantelpiece, Chatteris leant upon it with one arm, and turned his face towards his little audience.

"She has refused you then after all," exclaimed Adelaide, "base and deceitful creature!"

Chatteris was silent for a moment, then he said, bitterly:

"You have no reason to distress yourself, ladies; the bargain is made. My lord's debts will be paid, your serenity need not be ruffled, for Merton Court remains your own. There will be one sufferer in this business, and he is one who will not intrude his miseries upon you more than he can help. You must allow something, however, for a man whose dearest hope in life is shattered into dust, who sees nothing for the future but a slavery, infinitely more galling than a felon's chain. I fear you will not find Edward Chatteris complacent and sweet-tempered henceforth, and all I can advise you to do is to give so miserable a dog as wide a berth as possible. I shall not intrude my presence much at Merton Court. I fear that my temper and my manners will undergo such a change that I shall scarcely be fit society for a family so refined. For the few remaining months of liberty that remain to me I shall live chiefly in barracks, and the less inquiries that are made for me

the more satisfied I shall be. Now I am going to my room. I suppose it is ready for me? I shall leave to-morrow before breakfast."

"Edward," cried Adelaide, "you are forgetting your dignity as a gentleman and a Chatteris."

"I rejoice to hear it," cried the brother, scornfully. "I am delighted to forget anything and everything connected with the past. Had I not remembered so acutely that I was a gentleman and a Chatteris I should not have pledged myself to a thralldom which I can only pray may end speedily in my death or madness."

And so saying the unhappy young man rushed desperately from the room, leaving consternation and dismay amongst his proud and graceful sisters.

(To be continued.)

LOSS OR GAIN?

AN old gentleman, leaning forward with his hands clasped over a gold-headed cane, was seated in a summer-house, situated upon the grounds of an hotel at a fashionable watering-place. He was in a corner hidden by drooping vines, and his face expressed deep and apparently painful thought. The refrain of his sad musing was:

"Only one person in the whole world to love me, and I shall lose even that love now!"

On the other side of the summer-house, divided from the side the old gentleman occupied by a rustic partition, two ladies, young and fair, rustled in, and, taking out some fancy work, settled down for a chat.

One was tall, and dressed in a pretty costume, that was at once youthful and matronly; the other was petite, blonde, and not more than eighteen.

Mrs. Courtland spoke first.

"Embroidery, Alice?" she said. "A handkerchief corner. For your trousseau?"

"Yes," and the sweet voice faltered, while a burning blush crimsoned the fair cheek. "Is it not pretty?"

"Very. I want to talk about your prospects, child. Your Aunt Marcia tells me you are making a splendid match."

"Did she? I think so, Blanche. Malcolm is so noble and good, and a true Christian!"

"But your aunt tells me he is the favourite nephew of the great merchant, Henry Bates, whose wealth is something enormous. You have only to help him play his cards well, and he will probably be heir to a magnificent fortune. But what ails you? You look as if I was telling you a piece of news."

"I think Aunt Marcia has been misinformed, that is all."

"Then he is not Henry Bates's nephew?"

"I never heard him speak of a rich uncle, and I am quite sure he has no hope of inheriting money. He has a good salary, and my little fortune will buy and furnish a small house, so we can make a comfortable and, I hope, a happy home."

"Did he never speak to you of his uncle?"

"Not of a rich uncle. He has told me of a lame uncle, his mother's brother, who has been very kind to him, given him his education and a start in business. He always talks of him with the deepest love and pity."

"Pity!"

"He suffers tortures from the effects of a fall, that has lamed him for life, and often causes him weeks of agonizing pain. Malcolm tells me with tears in his eyes of his fears of losing this dearest friend and kind uncle, and I think he hopes I may be useful sometimes in nursing him."

"I wonder if it is the same!"

"Tell me, Blanche, some of the best places to go for our furniture and carpets. It will be new work for me to buy household goods, and Aunt Sophy is not well enough to help me much."

"Oh! I will go with you. But I declare if I were you I would wait and see if your Aunt Marcia is right. Your fortune will never buy or furnish such a house as a future millionaire should live in."

"My fortune," said Alice Hunter, with a ring in her clear voice, "will furnish a house suitable for a clerk with two hundred a year salary, which is what my husband has. If Malcolm has a rich uncle, he is not the man to live in expectation of money to come to him over a grave. If his uncle is, as you say, very rich, Malcolm would hate money won by the death of the nearest relative and dearest friend he has. But I don't believe in the money, for he never spoke of it to me."

Then the talk drifted into discussion of bridal finery, of furniture, and stories of the young wife's content in her own married life.

But the old man leaning upon the cane was thinking:

"Can it be true? Does Malcolm think so little of my money, that will be his, that he has never even mentioned it to his promised wife? Can it be that

I shall gain a loving, tender niece, instead of losing my nephew, when Malcolm marries?"

The more he thought of it the more incredible it was to him. Distrust, the almost inevitable curse of great wealth, had kept him aloof from most of his fellow men for years. His sister's orphan child was the sole exception to this universal suspicion. Malcolm had loved him when he was a mere boy, too young to understand money's value. There had surely been no calculation in his young brain when he had nestled his curly head upon his uncle's arm and put up his rosy lips to be kissed. Yet, though the uncle had never held out a promise of making the lad his heir, as he grew older the love never wavered. When the dreadful accident that had lamed him for life fell upon the old gentleman, Malcolm had nursed him back to comparative health, tenderly and devotedly.

Loving his nephew so deeply, he had felt a keen pain at the news of his betrothal. He had never seen Alice Hunter, but he knew she had been brought up in a circle of fashion, and was the orphan niece of one of society's gayest votaries, Mrs. Marcia Haydon. He ascertained by inquiry that the young girl had inherited two thousand pounds from her father, and that her winters were spent with her Aunt Marcia, her summers with a maiden sister of her father. She was quite a belle, though only in society one season, pretty and accomplished, and the old man groaned in spirit over his nephew's choice.

A belle, and with a head full of fashionable frivolity, he was convinced that the girl had been won by the prospect of Malcolm's heirship to his own fortune. He had seen in the future his nephew estranged from him by the influence of a dressy, empty-headed woman, or, still more appalling, his niece-to-be making false protestations of affection, with a hope of winning golden favours.

While he mused upon the conversation he had overheard, the silvery voices of his young neighbours still sounding beside him, there was a sudden crash, something struck him upon the head, and he lost consciousness.

Cries from the summer-house, from groups of people collected in the grounds, brought a party of men speedily to the spot. The rotten posts supporting the roof upon one side had given way, and the side and roof had fallen in. Mrs. Courtland and Miss Hunter were buried under the fallen timbers, the doorway being completely blocked, but were uninjured. Not so the old gentleman who had been their unsuspected listener. He was taken out pallid and senseless.

Nobody knew him. He had come by the morning train, had taken breakfast, but no room, and asked the hour for the return train. A surgeon summoned as speedily as possible announced a broken arm and injury to the head, making a likelihood of a long, tedious illness. There was some animated discussion, some suggestions of hospital, a search through the pockets of the unconscious victim, resulting in the discovery of a small sum of money, but no letters, papers or cards, and finally a despatch of one and another, each going his or her way, with the comforting reflection:

"It is none of my business."

But when they had all deserted the injured man, the surgeon, still busy binding up his arm, as he lay upon a bench brought from the ruined summer-house, felt a light touch on his hand, and looked up, to see a little figure in mourning, with a sweet face very pale.

"Can I help you?" Alice Hunter asked.

"No, child, not now."

"What will they do with him?"

"I suppose he must go to a London hospital."

"But the ride—the journey?"

"Will cause great additional suffering, perhaps result in death."

"Doctor, will they keep him here if he is paid for?"

"Certainly; but there is not money enough about him to pay his board a week."

"I will pay it."

"You!"

"Yes; I will not let him die for want of money I have. He," and her lip quivered, "he looks like my dear father who is dead!"

"Yes. Here come the men to carry him to the station. I think I will have him taken to the little cottage where I am staying. It will cost less and be more quiet."

Mrs. Courtland declared Alice was outraging the proprieties most dreadfully when the young girl went to the cottage and offered her services as nurse to the doctor; but Aunt Sophy silenced comment by moving her belongings from the hotel to the quiet cottage, and the doctor found he had a valuable assistant.

Alice explained, in her quiet, low voice, that her father was ill for nine long months before he died,

and she was his nurse. This accounted for the noiseless woollen dresses, the velvet-shod feet, the quick eye and ready hand, and, when the sufferer recovered consciousness, the gentle voice and tact that quieted him in paroxysms of pain and fever.

Aunt Sophy was too much of an invalid herself to help, but she sat beside the bed while Alice moved to and fro, made dainty soups and tempting dishes, and performed all nursing duties.

The invalid had one long talk with the doctor, and then submitted to the gentle ministrations of the two women, only insisting upon a man the doctor provided, being with him at night and within call.

The season was over, and only these three remained of the summer boarders at the little cottage, when, one cool October day, the invalid, now fast recovering, called Alice to him.

"I shall soon be well again," he said, regretfully.

"Yes," she answered, cheerily, "very soon."

"I shall miss my nurse!"

"And I my patient; but I am glad you are recovering. We were afraid at one time there would be a more painful parting."

"You mean I was in danger of dying. Why should that be painful? I am old."

She made no answer, looking sorrowfully into his uplifted eyes.

"And a burden upon you, the doctor tells me. Why did you make yourself responsible for a stranger?"

The fair face flushed, the soft eyes were dewy with feeling, as Alice said, softly:

"Because you are old and seemed poor and friendless. I was glad it was in my power to aid you. Do not think it was at any great cost," she added, with a generous desire to lighten the burden of obligation. "I have some money lying idle."

"For the wedding-day, perhaps. Well, child, you might have poorer jewels to deck your bridal than an old man's tears of gratitude and love. I am getting well, and shall soon leave you; will you give me a keepsake?"

The girl loosened a little locket from a chain round her throat, cut off one of her golden curls and put in the place of some hair she took out, and laid the trinket in the old man's hand.

"With my love," she said, softly.

"Ah, child," he sighed, "an old man, ill and feeble, wins little love."

"Yet," she said, earnestly, "you must believe that I have nursed you, since you were conscious, with affection. My own father is gone, but if ever you want a daughter's care or affection, believe me I will gladly come to you, if possible."

Three days later the little cottage was deserted. Aunt Sophy and Alice returned to their home to make up for lost time in dressmaking and sewing, and Alice cheerfully paid out of her small patrimony for the board and expenses of her venerable patient.

She little guessed how deep an impression her care and tenderness had made upon the heart so long closed against human affection, so distrustful of any advances from his fellow-creatures. It was a revelation to him, this active charity to an utter stranger. He had gone to the hotel merely to see Malcolm's choice, and had purposely left all clue to his identity behind him. He had intended meeting Alice, if possible, unknown, and watching her unobserved; but accident had thrown them together in a way he little anticipated. The first use he made of his recovery was to write to his nephew, and Malcolm met him at the station when he returned home.

Knowing nothing of the recent accident, the young man was shocked at the change in his uncle's face.

"You have been ill?" he cried.

"Very ill."

"Why did you not send for me?"

"I had even better nursing than yours, Malcolm. Don't ask me any questions now, but tell me about your marriage preparations."

"Alice has gone home, and will remain until November. Then she comes to Mrs. Haydon's, and will buy her house and furniture."

"In November?"

"Yes."

Late in November she came, her trunks full of Aunt Sophy's daintiest stitching, and Aunt Marcia gave her cordial greeting. A grand wedding was the display upon which this lady had set her heart, and Alice shrank a little at the comments upon the rich uncle, and her own good fortune in the "first-rate match."

But just before the wedding-day a little note was brought to Alice, by a gorgeous footman, who was driven to her aunt's behind a private carriage. The note was from Malcolm, and begged her to come to him in the carriage.

Wondering, but obedient, Alice was speedily ready, and was driven to a handsome house, where the door was opened to usher her into a stylish drawing-room,

where a gentleman awaited her, and Malcolm, advancing, said:

"My Uncle Harry, Alice!"

Kindly blue eyes looked into her own, withered hands were extended, and a voice she knew well said:

"We are old friends, Malcolm. Are we not, Alice?"

Then, before she could answer, the old man continued:

"I have thought, Alice, that it was unkind to have my nephew wait for my death before sharing in my wealth. I have borne a curse of distrust in my heart for many years thinking my money won me all the affection, save Malcolm's, that was offered me. But, though you were well content to wed the young clerk, and put your own patrimony into his home, you must not refuse my heir, who has accepted from me an income that makes him independent, and this home."

"My love for Malcolm can bear riches or poverty," was the answer, "but, sir, our home needs you. You will come, will you not, to the children who will try to make your life happy by loving care? Long before I knew you, Malcolm told me he hoped, when he had a home, to win you to live in it. Will you let me, too, beg of you to come to us?"

"Gladly, child, gladly!" the old man said.

"I understand now," Alice said to Malcolm, "why you wanted to wait till after the wedding to buy our house. You wanted to surprise me."

"I assure you I am as surprised as you are, though it was Uncle Henry who persuaded me to wait."

So where the rich, lonely man had feared to lose the one love of his life, he gained another tenderer, sweeter love, to brighten his declining years by a daughter's devotion and affection. A. S.

THE PROPOSED FRENCH INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION FOR 1875.

It has been already announced that it is proposed to attempt an International at Paris next year, which originates in private enterprise. Authority has been obtained to form a series of annexes to the Palais de l'Industrie, which would cover the Cour de la Rhine and the adjacent avenues.

The "Revue Industrielle," while supporting the project in the belief that it will have a certain degree of success, regrets to see spreading about secondary exhibitions, too closely approaching each other, in which labours are wasted that might be advantageously utilized when the moment arrives for renewing a great International Exhibition. Public attention, and especially the efforts of exhibitors, are wearied by multiplying these industrial expositions. The progress made in the various branches of mechanical construction, and especially in the manufacture of furniture, of clothing of sugar, paper, etc., proceed, it is true, but much too slowly to give to successive exhibitions their principal element of success—novelty. It requires an interval of ten or fifteen years to bring about important improvements in any industry. In fine arts and sculpture, on the contrary, frequent exhibitions are an absolute necessity; but in France, the annual salons and the concours regionaux or local shows, supply this want.

And what is the time chosen for making an appeal to producers and manufacturers for this new industrial manifestation? Work is suspended in a great number of factories, business is dull, and agriculture has seriously suffered during the last two years. Is it hoped to inspire confidence in the markets and increase orders? Experience has proved that exhibitions facilitate transactions in the time of full activity, but that they have not the power of animating commerce when it is languishing. The managers of this new exhibition should reflect on the disastrous results of the exhibitions of Lyons and Vienna before commencing their problematic operation, to which, however, notwithstanding its misgivings, the "Revue" wishes all success. These are the remarks of the French journalist, who might at least be expected to be favourably disposed towards the project.

PRESIDENT GRANT, now that his salary has been doubled—it is only 10,000*l.* sterling, however—has begun to display much pomp. He has set up a fast four-in-hand, with gilt harness and liveried driver and footmen, and in this equipage dashes through the wide avenues of Washington, to the amazement of the populace. When he gets out of town he takes the ribbons in his own hands; and a gentleman who saw him thus driving for the first time, remarked to his companion that the President's turn-out would do credit to the London Four-in-Hand Club.

MODERN PILGRIMAGES.—It is asserted that France will surpass this year the pilgrimages of 1873, and that a proof of their fervent piety will be shown in the endurance of bodily mortifications; there will be

more travelling on foot than in sleeping railway cars, and there will be no proxy pilgrims. A great development is anticipated in the form of international pilgrimages; one is to be organized for England even next June, a return to the English religious excursionists of last year to Paray-le-Monial. Paris has now an exceptional pilgrimage to the statue of Jeanne d'Arc. Every passing regiment renders military honour to the maid. Her memory has become a worship. The railings surrounding the statue continue to be covered with wreaths, bouquets, and little angels in plaster. Then parents bring their boys and girls to admire the once saviour of France, and perhaps the only one the country has ever seen, giving them a kind of clinical lecture on patriotism at the same time.

THE DURATION OF BRAIN IMPRESSIONS.

In a case wherein I defended a party indicted for assault with intent to murder, the proof showed that the prosecutor, on whom the assault was committed, was standing in a public road, talking to the father of the defendant about an alleged larceny, when the defendant approached him from behind, and struck him on the back of the head with the butt end of a gun, and he fell senseless from the blow. A fight ensued between the friends of the parties, in which a number of shots were fired; and after the fight was over, the prosecutor was carried into a yard near by and resuscitated, regaining consciousness in about thirty minutes after receiving the blow. He testified most positively that he had not the slightest recollection of receiving the blow. He recollected and detailed the conversation between himself and defendant's father up to the moment the blow was struck, and also what occurred and what was said when he regained consciousness, as stated by a number of other persons who witnessed the occurrence; but of the blow itself, how, when, and from whom it was received, not the slightest impression had been made on his mind. Except the surface bruising on the back of the head, which lasted a few days only, no bad effects were experienced from the blow, and his mind and memory are unimpaired.

A similar result was observed during the late war, in persons stunned by the explosion of shells. A gentleman now living, who was an officer in the French army, was fighting in the ranks. Just as he was in the act of taking aim with his rifle, a shell struck his weapon and exploded. He fell senseless, blackened with powder, and apparently dead. He had been struck on the head and other parts of the body with fragments of the shell, and was dangerously wounded; but after an unconsciousness of several hours, he was discovered to be alive, and was cared for and recovered. His mind and memory are as clear as ever, and he is now a successful lawyer in full practice. He assures me that no impression of the explosion of the shell was made on his mind. He saw no flash, heard no sound; he recollects distinctly aiming his rifle to fire; but after that, there is a perfect blank in his memory until his resuscitation.

These instances appear to indicate that the nerves of sensation may be paralyzed in less time than is required to make an impression on the mind which memory will retain. What time is required to make such an impression? The flash and noise of the explosion of a shell immediately in front of a man in battle would excite the nerves of sight and hearing as violently as it is possible to excite them; and in the last instance stated, the light of the flash certainly reached the eye before the fragment struck the head. What caused the delay in stamping an impression of it on the memory, and how long must the vital organs remain intact to enable the mind to receive an impression through the senses?

It seems to me that these questions suggest a field for scientific inquiry, in which important results may be reached. D. S. T.

REMARKABLE LONGEVITY.—One of the old Ulster yeomen—a man who was married, and was rearing a family when the yeomen were in the glory of their work in '98—died at his residence, Pubble, near Tempo, county Fermanagh, recently. The deceased, whose name was Joseph Brown, had nearly completed the great age of 105 years. He was among those sent to the west of Ireland to oppose the invasion of the Frenchmen who landed at Killala. He also served ten years in the Tyrone Militia. He was married three times, and was father of 19 children, many of whom are alive, and some of whom have grandchildren. He never complained of serious ill-health until within a few weeks of his death.

THE SPIDER'S WEB.—It is commonly believed that spiders are able to project their webs to distant objects, thus bridging over the intervening space; but now this is done I have never seen explained. Once

I saw a small spider upon some projecting object above a table, before an open window, briskly engaged in trying to do something, without seeming to accomplish his object. I therefore watched him, and saw that after attaching his thread to the projecting object he spun down four or five inches, and then commenced climbing his thread, carrying the same with him, or, rather, winding it up in a ball. Having reached his point of support he descended again, and wound up the thread as before. This he did three or four times, till his ball was nearly as large as the head of a pin. Then, taking his position upon the top he remained apparently motionless for half a minute, at the end of which time his ball had disappeared, and there was seen a delicate line a foot or more in length flying in the wind. He was evidently trying to attach his thread to a lamp standing in the centre of the table; but he had miscalculated the direction of the wind. I then carefully broke off the flying thread, when, finding that he had failed to reach the lamp, he repeated the attempt, going through precisely the same movements as before. This he did four or five times, when, doubtless concluding that the fates were against him or that some one was interfering with his operations, he left for parts unknown. Whether he projected his ball of silk as the sailor does his coil of rope, or whether he merely unwound it, letting the free end fly in the breeze I could not make out, but it is very certain that when the flying thread appeared the ball beneath his feet had disappeared.—J. H. P.

THE BLENKARNE INHERITANCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Miss Arlingcourt's Will," "The Ebony Casket,"
"The Secret of Schwarzenburg," etc., etc.

CHAPTER X.

MADAME BLANC appeared for a moment to blush under Lady Blenkarne's attack, but the next moment she said, sternly:

"Take your seat, my Lady Blenkarne, and use respectful language, if you do not want these doors closed against you hereafter. You use strange appellations for the benefactress who took you from a hovel and made you what you are now—my Lady Blenkarne, of Blenkarne Terrace. One would think you mad."

"I think sometimes I am," moaned her ladyship, sinking down drearily again.

"Come, come—this is nonsense. Let us talk of something that has common-sense meaning. You have a new tutor for Sir Marmaduke. Amariah told me how the neighbourhood was admiring the great pains you take to select a gentleman of thorough culture and ability. That was a bright thought of yours, calling in that garrulous rector. Do you like the tutor?"

"He is a true gentleman," replied Lady Blenkarne. "And handsome beside. I liked the young man's looks," was madame's grim rejoinder.

"You have seen him?"

"Yes. I made Amariah find him out and drive my coach where I could see him. You ought to enjoy his society."

"I might if it did not so sharply enforce the contrast," she sighed, unaware of the little malicious smile on the shrivelled lips of the living mummy.

"When I see him so bright and gay and full of generous emotions, such a staff to lean upon, and look at my own desolation, it only makes it harder to bear."

"Why not accept the staff then? A simpleton you will always remain, I fear. I say why not be happy again? You are a fine-looking woman yet, my lady. Time has not yet laid a single harrowing line upon your beauty. You can be charming and fascinating beyond anything your insipid girlhood knew. Win this tutor. He is only lately thrust out from brilliant prospects, and will the more readily accept with joy a charming wife and a stately home. Sir Marmaduke insures your safe possession of Blenkarne Terrace. You say you like the gentleman. Win him for your husband, and enjoy all the delights your sentimental heart has been yearning for. I am not only willing—I approve."

Lady Blenkarne had listened at the first like one not crediting the sounds which came to her ears. Presently, however, the vivid scarlet came burning on her cheeks, her eyes flashed, her breast heaved stormily. She looked, indeed, as Madame Blanc had pictured, a still young and surpassingly beautiful woman, not to be slightly scorned by any. The latter believed she was yielding to the fair temptation. But the next instant a dark frown clouded the white brows and brought the narrow lines out upon the smooth forehead, and a white hand, the fingers clenched wrathfully, was thrust toward her.

"Aunt," spoke Lady Blenkarne, "I will try to think you do not think to insult me, that you speak in ill-advised but well-meaning kindness, instead of seeking to plant another sting in my already aching heart. I like Mr. Osborne very much. I have admired him exceedingly, but Heaven and he, and I, know I had no other thought except the yearning wish that such a son might have been the prop and solace of my declining years. This is what I really feel. But if it were different, if I loved him with all the passionate devotion that my girlhood knew, and threw away—" here she paused to wipe her damp forehead, and her voice held unutterable bitterness, "I tell you, aunt, I would hold this right hand of mine in the flames till it was burned to a crisp before I would give it away again guiltily. It has been perjured once. That is enough. Heaven knows that I have had proof enough that the way of the transgressor is hard. You will not find me walking wilfully into any new sin."

"As if I did not understand the meaning of it all," vociferated Madame Blanc, roused to fierce anger by something in this speech. "As if I did not always see to the bottom of your shallow heart. Poor, trembling simpleton, you have not strength to play the winning cards Fortune thrusts into your hand. Why did you so obstinately refuse to speak the words I bade you in Lord B.'s fascinated ear? No matter! I took care he should hear them all the same, and I said it was by Lady Blenkarne's wish I spoke. And the white-faced, haughty scion of a craven-hearted, baughty race lost his longed-for prize. He did not win the attachéship. And he still sighs, and longs, and suffers for the peerless Christabel as well. Ah, ha! your soft heart does not hinder the spell working!"

"My soft heart!" replied Lady Blenkarne, bitterly. "I tell you, yes," repeated the other, her voice rising higher and shriller. "You prate of your hatred, your revenge, your wonderful pride, and I tell you to your face, my Lady Blenkarne, that why you will not listen to the flattering words or the honourable offers of other men is because in your secret soul you love Guy Blenkarne still!"

Her ladyship reeled back as if a heavy blow had fallen upon her, and then suddenly she faced about, her face deadly pale, her white teeth clenched, her eyes blazing.

"Take care," she cried, hoarsely; "take care! you will drive me to forget my own dignity. I shall strike you. I shall trample upon you. I shall thrust those scorching words back upon you."

Madame Blanc pulled the bell lustily, and in two minutes Amariah was standing there with his accustomed stolid look, though he could not fail to read the excitement of those two pallid faces. Perhaps he was used to these scenes, for he showed no sign of surprise, and stood passively waiting for his part to commence.

"Well, Lady Blenkarne, have you anything farther to say to me?" asked madame, sinking down in her chair again, and resuming the sarcastic smile, frightened for a moment from her wrinkled face.

"Not much," returned her ladyship, by one mighty effort conquering the trembling of every limb, "except this, that a young man intruded at the Terrace to-day, asking for Colonel Guy Blenkarne, and that I sent him away overwhelmed by my rage that the name even should be mentioned there or in my presence."

"A young man! It must have been a stranger," responded the other, curiously conquering her anger.

"It was, certainly. He brought a letter—from Calcutta, I think—of introduction from some one," was the cold reply.

"It must be looked to!—it must be looked to! Amariah, I think you or Blaise must be shamefully derelict. Why did you leave me to hear of this accidentally?" cried out madame, sharply.

"Indeed, madame," said Amariah, "Blaise is this minute watching that young fellow's movements. He calls himself Captain Algeron Vansittart, and has engaged rooms at the Club House. I was waiting to be sure it was of importance before telling you the story."

"Humph! Everything that concerns those vipers, who are so hard to crush, is of importance. Show my lady out now—don't you see she is waiting to go? Good-day, Lady Blenkarne."

"Farewell, aunt," was the grave reply.

"Farewell—eh? What does that mean?" spoke up the aunt, hastily.

"Not much for you, perhaps. When you care to see me again send an apology for to-day's insult—that is all."

And Lady Blenkarne swept away while yet the mocking peal of laughter in which madame indulged for sole reply echoed behind her.

"Poor simpleton! as if I did not know how to read and use the workings of a proud and impetuous nature like hers!" muttered the latter as she was left alone.

"Does she think to rebel at this late hour?—she, who is so completely in my power—at my mercy! Send an apology, indeed! I have but to command and she will come. But this Calcutta letter must be looked after. It should be—Amariah!" as that worthy made his appearance again—"do you understand me—I must know the remotest object of that young man's visit; and you must bring me a copy of the letter he brought."

"But, madame—"

She dug out the skeleton of a hand, with its blazing ruby, so fiercely, that he involuntarily retreated a step.

"I tell you I must have it; and you know the more impossible my 'musts' the more golden the harvest you and Blaise gather."

Amariah bowed and withdrew.

Lady Blenkarne meanwhile was shivering amid her velvet cushions as her costly carriage bore her on.

"Oh, Heaven pity me!" she cried under her breath. "That cruel shaft sped home! It is true! it is true! I love him yet!"

CHAPTER XI.

"You return as bright and cheery as you promised," said Lady Blenkarne, with an approving smile, as Frank Osborne met her at the door which gave admittance to the wing devoted to Sir Marmaduke—where only his private servants, his mother and tutor passed unquestioned—and stepped aside to allow her to pass through.

"I found my ride thoroughly delightful. Thank your ladyship for that admirable chestnut. I have already established a loving friendship with the docile creature."

"May you always find him a panacea for dulness," returned her ladyship, lingering, and then turning suddenly, she said: "Go on, if you please. I would like to see how Sir Marmaduke receives you. John tells me you have taken his fancy wonderfully."

Bowing in silence Frank proceeded through the long corridor to a stout oak door, to whose massive lock he applied a key which he took from his pocket. This was the only entrance into that wing, and the door was always locked. Her ladyship, the tutor, and John and wife Katy, all being provided with keys, and they alone, of all the extensive household, knew aught concerning that mysterious suite of rooms into which not one of the other servants had ever glanced, and about which there was so much suppressed curiosity.

As he closed and looked the door behind there came from beyond a loud call:

"Osborne! Osborne!"

Lady Blenkarne smiled again approvingly upon the young man.

"He knows your step. That is another excellent sign of his liking for you. He only learns the step of those he cares for. He is not acquainted with mine yet."

Frank glanced back into her face as she said this, wondering if there was any motherly pain at this confession. He was sorely puzzled by the face he beheld. The lips were set together firmly with a pressure too strong to be natural, her eyes were restless, and yet resolute, like one whose soul quailed, but whose iron will conquered. She made him a sign to go on, and he passed lightly through an arched doorway hung with damask curtains which could be dropped entirely, concealing the door, perhaps also capable of muffling sounds on either side. Within was a large circular room hung with thick damask of a brilliant red with heavy gilded fringes falling upon the soft carpeted floor.

A large table—the top a rich slab of coloured marble, the sides upholstered in damask like the walls—stood in the centre of the room. Gilded cages filled with singing birds hung from the ceilings, out of reach, however, even from the tallest person. Lounges were set here and there, and elaborately carved brackets, also fastened so high as to be out of reach, held delicate vases heaped with the loveliest blossoms of the garden. An easel near the table held a small blackboard, and on the floor lay two or three heavy volumes. The bookcase was beyond, and its solid walnut doors hid from sight the volumes it contained. A large globe, superbly mounted, stood near the double window, whose plate glass was protected by a fanciful lattice gilded, but of strong metal. And at the globe, with one hand as fair, and soft, and delicate as that of the daintiest lady in the land, twirling it round and round in a pettish, impatient fashion, stood Sir Marmaduke, a tall, slender youth with a girlish, innocent face, lit up just at that moment with a bright, expectant smile.

The moment Frank Osborne entered he stopped his meaningless play with the globe, clapped his hands together, and ran forward to meet him. Her lady-

ship, standing by the doorway grasping the silken hangings in her jewelled fingers, watching every look and motion with a strange blending of fierce pain and disgust on her face.

Frank allowed his hand to be held, and patted, and stroked, for at least five minutes, then quickly drew it away and made a little commanding gesture. The youth, with hanging head, took a step forward, and folded his arms.

"Good-day, Sir Marmaduke. How do you do to-day?" said Frank, intending to speak naturally and carelessly, but in spite of himself infusing the teacher's tone and looks into his manners.

"Good-day, Osborne. I'm pretty well thank you," returned his pupil, in a low, sing-song tone like a child repeating a lesson.

"And how are the lessons?" continued Frank, taking up from the table a wire strung with bright-coloured marbles, and dropping them one by one. "Now we are counting. One, two, three."

The numbers were repeated after him in a weary, plodding tone.

"Ah, we can do better," spoke Frank, going to the rear door and returning in a moment with a basket of grapes.

Sir Marmaduke's face brightened. He came close to his tutor, and held out his hand.

"Count!" spoke Frank, authoritatively.

"One, two, three!"

As the numbers were pronounced the grapes were dropped into his hand and hastily transferred to the lad's mouth. Not satisfied, Sir Marmaduke laughed, and said softly:

"Ten, twenty, fifty, hundred."

Frank laughed with him, gave him a bunch, and went back to the doorway where Lady Blenkarns still stood.

"I think there is something gained," he said, hesitatingly.

There was a little smile on her lips. What fierce scorn and disgust were in those beautiful eyes.

"I suppose so," she answered, dearly, "as much as could be expected. Ah, not at all!"

And then she pressed both hands hard against her heart, as if its hurried beatings were so many dagger stabs. Frank shuddered a little in spite of himself, that was such a strange face for a mother to turn upon her child, however unfortunate the latter might be. The lad saw her too, and pausing from his enjoyment of the grapes he struck out his hand fiercely, snarling forth:

"Go way, go way, my lady. Come back, Osborne."

"He does not like me," said Lady Blenkarns, coldly. "I do not know whether his aversion is strange, or natural. But I am very glad to see how much influence you have over him. John is getting old. When you have him perfectly under control we must find a younger attendant to take John's place."

Frank stood in silence, hardly knowing what was proper for him to say, while she stood looking over to her son in a long silence.

Suddenly she burst forth with a little accompanying shudder:

"Don't say again that you do not earn your salary, Mr. Osborne. It seems cruel now to think of leaving you here. After your free, joyous career through the beautiful country to come back and be shut up here. It would kill me." Another shudder, and she added, fiercely: "It is killing me, even to know what is here. But," she added eagerly, "you will be patient—you will bear it bravely. You have promised me?"

"I have. I am not really so tired as you think. I have developed a keen interest in my own course of instruction. I find myself studying all the cases I have read and known."

"I am so thankful to you. And already rumours have returned to me from our wise and sagacious rector. The townspeople look upon you as a prodigy of learning, for the good man has made the most of his visits here, and told everybody how much pains Lady Blenkarns is taking to secure for Sir Marmaduke the most profoundly educated tutor the country offers. One gentleman proudly assured me the country were all aware what a prodigy I meant to introduce as the head of the famous old family, and another tenderly besought me not to be too strict in the matter, but to remember that the brain might be stimulated sometimes at the body's expense."

Here she broke into another bitter laugh.

Sir Marmaduke gave a little snarling cry as he heard it.

"Naughty, naughty! Go away, my lady. Come back Osborne," he vociferated.

Lady Blenkarns turned deadly pale, so much so that Frank, believing she would faint, rang hastily for Katy, who made her appearance promptly, but was summarily dismissed by her mistress.

"Do not be alarmed, my friend," she said, gently, looking at Frank's compassionate face, wistfully.

"It is not often I lose my self-control, but there was no danger of my forgetting it entirely. I have schooled myself too long—too long. But fate is hard with me. Oh! why could not you be my son—you, strong, noble, intellectual, everything my fondest pride could have asked? Ah! what a staff to have leaned upon—what a joy and blessing to have thanked Heaven for on my knees night and day. When I think of it—when I picture it and look—yonder—"

She paused, her voice suffocated, her eyes flooded with wild tears, her hands clenched together.

Frank, in deep distress, could do nothing, say no word even of attempted consolation. But suddenly she writhed away from him as if pierced to the heart by some terrible stroke.

"Ah Heaven!" she cried, hoarsely, "forgive my impotent passion—my sacrilegious reproach. Am I not rightly punished—do I not deserve [it all, unnatural monster that I am!]"

And with this last she turned and fled away, like a demented creature stung and pursued by some fiendish whisper.

Frank waited until he heard the door clang heavily behind her, then went and sat down by the window, while his charge in the inner room was whining and whimpering under John's restriction of fruit.

No wonder the peaceful charm of the Manor House returned to his memory as a glimpse of the true paradise.

CHAPTER XII.

"Are you afraid that we shall all die here upon this solitary island before help comes to us?" asked a sweet, wistful voice, as the true Algeron Vansittant stood at the headland, with one arm thrown around the stunted palm tree and his eyes scanning the wide stretch of glittering water which sparkled back upon him in mocking beauty, smug of a single sail.

He turned quickly, the black melancholy of his face dispersed for the moment by a gentle, affectionate smile.

"Is it you, Daisy?" he asked. "Don't let me impair your brave spirit. I confess I am a little discouraged to-day, but there is nothing especially new to make me so. Your grandfather seems a little brighter this morning, and his cheerfulness ought to inspire us all, for certainly he suffers from these discomforts more than we, owing to his illness and weakness."

"The captain is certain the Bombay steamer ought to pass in sight of this place to-day or to-morrow," said the young girl, timidly; and they are building a new bonfire on the highest land to attract her attention. It frightens me to see you growing sad. I am sure your strength is giving out; and you have been so tireless in your efforts to help everybody but yourself. Have you tried some of those leaves my uncle brought? They are very refreshing—take some of these."

And she held out her hand to him with a coaxing smile.

"Take them from you, and when your poor lame uncle rathers them? My dear little Daisy, I am not quite a barbarian, though one of a shipwrecked company on a desolate island."

"But you have given grandfather and myself all the nice jelly you had in your box, without so much as tasting it yourself, I am sure. And you refuse to share with me this little handful of leaves!" she returned, quite as reproachfully.

"You have left your grandfather with Blennerhasset?" he said.

She smiled with some of the old archness that had been so charming to him on the steamer's deck.

"Nay, you need not think to send me back quite yet. Uncle is caring for grandpa, and he was the first to second my proposal to come out here, where you looked so gloomy and lonely. Do you think we do not care for our kind and generous friend? Don't despair yet, Captain Vansittant. It is very, very hard, I know; and our food is nearly all gone, carefully as we have staid it. But"—and here she lifted her white hand and pointed upwards—"Heaven is still watching over us. Think how much worse we might have fared; there are no dangerous animals nor cruel savages here, and there are herbs and roots, uncle says—plenty of them—which will sustain life."

"Dear, dear little Daisy, you make me so ashamed of myself!" exclaimed Algeron. "Don't spend your breath so uselessly. Let me confess to you the source of my disquiet, and I am ashamed of it, for here facing possible death, enduring privation, imprisonment and suspense, how poor and useless seemed all the world's treasures or advantages! I have discovered a great loss. It is incredible that I should not have remembered it before, but it was only last night that I became aware of the loss of a belt worn around my person while I was on the steamer."

I know it was there, for when I became aware of the possibility of shipwreck I looked at the fastenings to see that they were secure. All I know is that my father charged me to keep it safe—never to part with it—and it is gone. My letters of credit and introduction have disappeared with it—when, how, is a mystery, but they are all gone. There, now I have explained it all. And already, you see, I am growing cheerful again from having made confession to you."

"Oh, I am afraid you lost them when you so nobly rescued my father and me from a watery grave. Oh, I am afraid you lost the belt then!" cried Daisy, in a tone of keen sorrow.

"I don't see how it could be possible, fastened as it was, and under all my clothing!" he returned, dubiously.

"Then it may be upon the island. You have been everywhere felling the trees, gathering herbs, helping everybody," she cried, eagerly. "Oh, let us go now and look for it. I will tell Uncle Mike, and he will help us."

"Nay," he answered, gravely, "do you think I should stand idly moaning while there was a spot unsearched? I was up at the first dawn of light, seeking fruitlessly, and I have inquired of all the people here. It is hopelessly gone. Nay, don't look so grieved, or I shall be sorry I have told you. Perhaps, after all, it is of little consequence. I know nothing of the contents of the belt. My father may be able to set everything right again, but his solemn charge makes me anxious. As for the letters of credit, if they are safe under the sea, no harm will come of it. If, as the captain anticipates, the Bombay steamer should take us off, I can send back to my father, and the second letters will be forwarded directly to London. I was debating the question when you came up, should I proceed on my way, or turn back. And then it occurred to me what an awkward affair it might prove if any villain got those papers into his hands. It might be my ruin."

"Ah, Heaven!" exclaimed Daisy, sharply.

"What is it? you are ill, and I am torturing you with my senseless talk. Sit down; why, you are trembling from head to foot."

"Yes. I am so frightened with the terrible thought that came to me," exclaimed the girl, dropping down upon the ground, and resting her head wearily on her hand. "Oh, it would be too cruel a thing to happen to one so noble, and generous, and self-sacrificing. Heaven surely would not permit! Oh, I cannot believe it!"

Algeron put away his own disquietude promptly, sorely troubled, as he said, to see her sudden panic; for this petted, dainty darling of those two brave old men had kept up a cheerful courage, a gay sparkle of spirits, that had been like an inspiring cordial to the whole of the forlorn company.

"Daisy," said he, gently, for he had insensibly fallen into their pet way of addressing her, "if you don't want to pain me sorely, rouse yourself from this new terror, whatever it is. It was cruel in me to fret you with my little annoyances. I forgot your weakness, and that the heroic fortitude you have shown must have taxed your nerves beyond their strength. Come, give me some of the leaves, and you must take the last of the guava. I was saving it for your grandfather, but he will agree with me in saying it is best you should have it now."

As he spoke he brought forth the little box of guava jelly which he had hastily tumbled into his pocket on leaving the steamer, and held it out to her with the little wooden spoon he had manufactured.

She shook her head and relieved him by a smile, though it was but a wintry one.

"No, oh, no. I do not need it now. I will try the leaves with you. It is a pleasant aromatic flavour they leave, is it not?"

But within her own mind she was saying:

"I will not tell him yet. Why should I disquiet him with suspicions that have no chance to be verified or disproved? I will not tell him. But now I understand why that evil-eyed young man stole the boat and fled away, leaving us all to perish. He has Captain Vansittant's belt, and his money and letters also. I am as sure of it as if I saw him take them."

"See, there is the captain coming," said Algeron.

"I really believe the dearest wish he has for escaping from this island is to find and punish that thievish knave. I should not care to be in his place if we overhauled him in Bombay."

"I wish we might. Oh, I wish we might!" ejaculated Daisy, fervently.

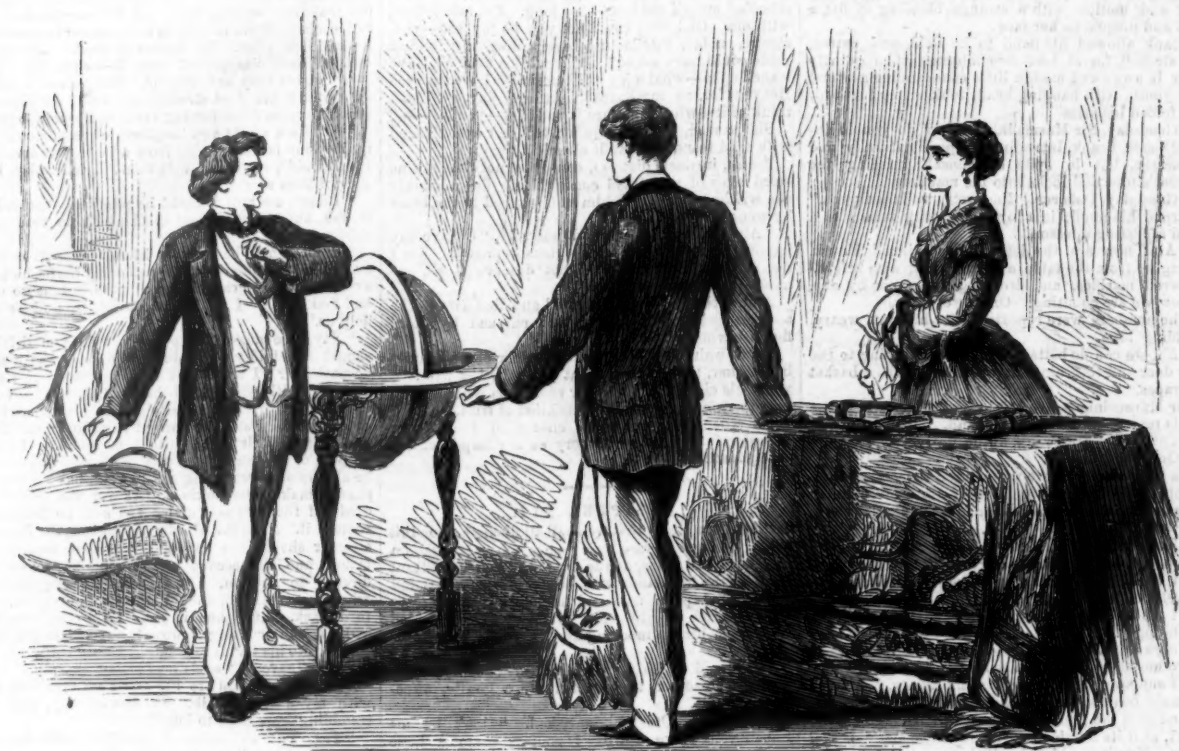
"Well, captain, what news?" asked Algeron, as the captain came up where they stood, and swept sea and sky with his glass.

"Nothing," except that we have one biscuit for to-morrow's ration," answered he, gloomily.

"But plenty of herbs and roots, and there are nuts—oceans of them," interposed Daisy's sweet voice.

The rugged face of the sailor softened.

"I didn't mind you were here, Miss Daisy. You've



[FRANK AND HIS PUPIL.]

kept the best heart of the crowd, and been a sunbeam for us all. Yes, yes, I daresay we could hold out a week longer. But if that steamer misses us there's a fortnight more without hope."

"It won't miss us, please Heaven," said Daisy. "Come, Captain Vansittant, let us go and throw our handful of leaves on the bonfire. It will never do to say we had no hand in it, especially if it is to be our means of deliverance."

"The princess has given command that a rescuing sail appears," playfully explained Algeron. "So keep your glass ready to spy it."

The captain had suddenly raised it, and was looking eagerly at the distant hue of blending sea and sky. They both saw the flash that went over his face.

"It is the steamer," cried Daisy, joyfully.

"No, no. It cannot be," ejaculated Algeron, in agitated tones, shading his eyes, and gazing with all his soul in them in the same direction. "I only see a little black cloud."

"The smoke of the steamer's track," pronounced the captain, hoarsely, and his strong hand shook.

Daisy uttered another rapturous cry, and Algeron muttered a fervent "Heaven be praised."

"Hush! in Heaven's name keep the secret until we are sure she is not passing along her accustomed track, and leaving us," cried the captain. "There are some of those poor, despairing creatures down there who would die outright to know her near and not coming to our aid. Come and help me pile up the bonfire higher and higher. Surely the watch on deck must see it, and if they have had news of my poor boat they ought to be looking out for us."

He went plunging up the craggy height on the other side, where the bonfire had been burning day and night since their arrival on the island. And Algeron, helping Daisy now with his arm, now with both hands, followed as swiftly as might be. The remnant of the crew were there feeding the fire. Just before they reached the great, whirling circle of roaring red blaze there went up a hoarse huzza. The captain had not arrived in season to stop it, and it was the sailors' joyful announcement of their discovery. Straightway from beneath arose a many-voiced tumult. Men shouting, laughing, women weeping in hysterical delight, wild ejaculations, hurried questions and joyful answers. And the whole company came scrambling up through the shubbery, over the rocks, forgetting weakness, illness—all crying out:

"The steamer is coming! The steamer is coming!"

Everybody fell to gathering the dry leaves, and heaping them on the fire, which seemed to share the

general glee, and roared, and sent up a tall column of smoke whirling to the very clouds.

"Why don't she turn, if she sees our signal?" muttered the captain, standing out recklessly on the very verge of the crag, and looking up in desperate appeal, now at the reversed flag, their signal of distress, and again at the tiny speck that seemed to crawl so slowly along the horizon.

"She is going by without seeing us," came in a low, horrified whisper from one of the sailors.

The captain's groan was echoed around the little circle of pallid faces and gleaming eyes. Then friends fell sobbing and bewailing into each other's arms, or clasping tight by one another, knelt down and stretched mute, appealing hands to Heaven.

Algeron Vansittant took the glass, and after a moment's steady gaze, exclaimed, jubilantly:

"Dry your tears, all of you. The vessel, whatever it is, has rounded to, and is changing her course."

The captain hastily snatched the glass away from him, and examined long enough to satisfy every doubt. Then turned toward them, the tears pouring down his bronzed cheeks.

"Good people, keep your knees and thank Heaven," said he, "for it is the blessed truth, the ship has changed her course, and is coming toward us."

Then followed a reverential silence, and eyes that until even now had kept free from tears over-ran with solemn and blissful joy.

An hour longer and all suspense was at an end. The gallant vessel came steaming along as if herself impatient to accomplish her errand of mercy. And when she lay to within full view of the group, and the captain, doffing his hat, showed himself to her officers, who were gathered there on the deck, glasses in hand, a ringing hurrah came echoing over to them across the water, and boats were promptly manned, and the joyful hearts of the shipwrecked ones knew that their dreary island imprisonment was over.

"Will the princess be pleased to command the restoration of my belt?" said Algeron Vansittant, playfully, when, three hours after, they were once more floating upon the water, and the good Bombay steamer was ploughing a triumphant course.

Daisy was sitting on deck, having just come from making her father comfortable below, and her sweet, bright face was again full of peaceful joy. A shade crossed it as he spoke, but she answered, promptly:

"I have wished and wished for it. Would indeed I had a fairy spell to insure it. I must believe that it will come about."

"So must I if you have been good enough to ask

for it. It is not half so gigantic an undertaking as bringing the steamer to that island," returned he.

"And now I must tell you my suspicion. That dreadful man who stole away with our boat. Has it not occurred to you that he might have taken the belt and the papers? Would not that explain his leaving us all behind?" she asked.

Algeron's playful smile disappeared instantaneously.

"The idea has never occurred to me," he said, thoughtfully. "but how could he have known anything about the belt, and what possible opportunity was there for him to have obtained possession of it?"

"I have been over every scene carefully," returned Daisy, "and I remember that he sat next to you in the boat. Mrs. Ferguson told me yesterday that his cabin was next to yours in that unfortunate steamer, and hers was opposite his. She remembers it particularly, because you called out to her to leave off weeping and get ready the life-preserver. She is sure the black-eyed Spaniard, as she calls him, was watching your movements, and that he followed you when you went on deck."

Algeron gave a quick start.

"Then everything is explained! I have never learned who brought me to my cabin after I was washed from my hold. I believe you are right. He took the belt and papers then. Could he have known how fatally their loss would affect me? Good Heavens! I see. Why he might pass under my name—he might!"

He started from the seat, and paced beside her restlessly.

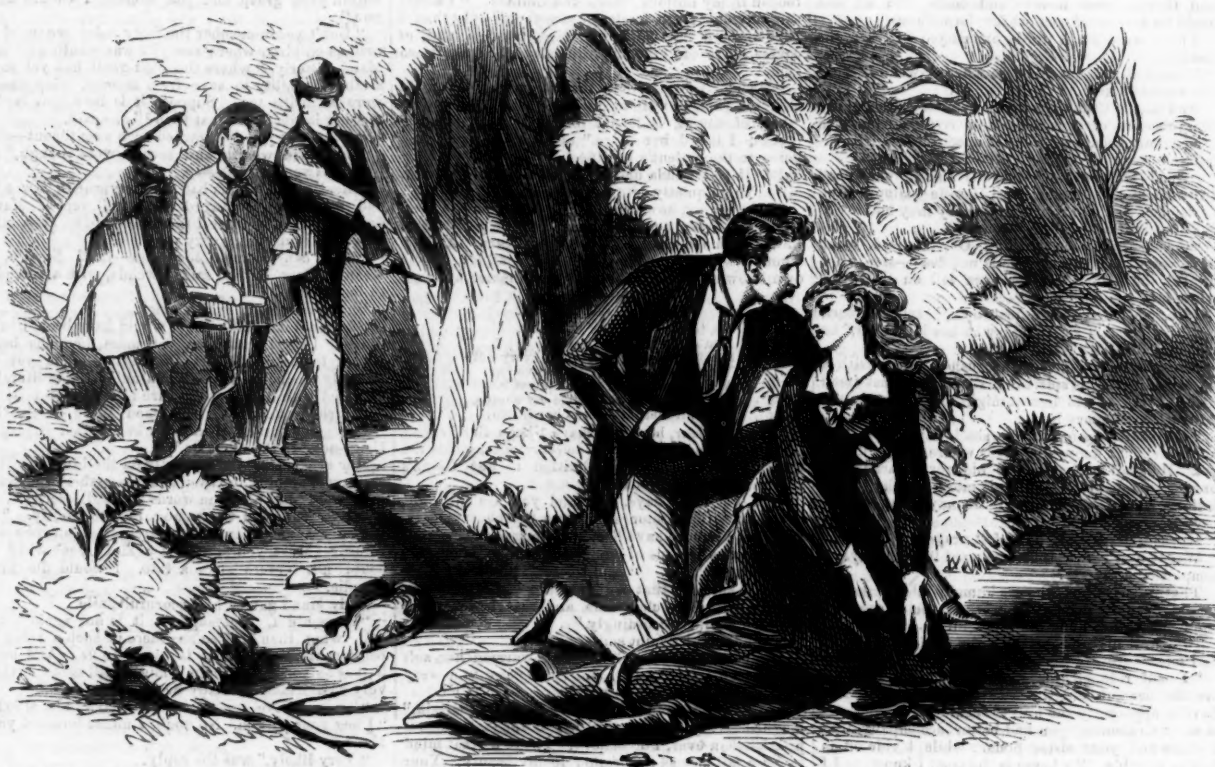
"My course is decided now," he muttered. "I must hasten on to England. I can send back letters to my father explaining all, but I must go on myself to follow and arrest the harm which might be done. It is wonderful he left me my purse and watch, but most marvellous how he found out about the belt. I dread to receive the general's letter in return for the information of the loss. I am frightened when I remember his solemn charges concerning it. I seem to have a superstitious feeling of danger and trouble."

"Would indeed I were a princess, and held my fairy spell," murmured Daisy, wistfully. "I cannot bear to see you look so troubled, Captain Vansittant."

"Can you not?" he answered gently, putting away at once his gloomy forebodings. "Well, the princess must not be troubled. See, I am smiling again."

And Daisy smiled upon him, and both were gay and hopeful again.

(To be continued.)



[AFTER THE ACCIDENT.]

THE DOUBLE BONDAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Lost Coronet," "Elgiva," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXI.

He looks upon her lips, and they are pale,
He takes her by the hand, and that is cold;
He whispers in her ear a heavy tale
As if she heard the awful words he told.
He lifts the snowy lids that close her eyes,
The virtue lost wherein they late excelled.

"STAND off. How dare you come between us?
You have killed her."

And Gilbert Dorrington looked fiercely up at his cousin, while claspings Gwenda's still senseless form in one arm, and waving off the impetuous approach of Lord Cranmore with the other.

"How dare I? By every right a man can have. Idiot, villain!" he went on passionately, his anger flashing as he saw the form of her he loved in another's firm embrace. "Give her to me, or—"

"Or what?" cried Gilbert, scornfully. "You are too craven to say openly what an honourable man should. And then, when she is protected—saved by one who would give his right hand to spare her one pang, you rave like a maniac, and dare to provoke me, your only real friend. Off man, off! and be wise," he went on, with a bitter scoff, as he again bent over the white face of her he held in his firm clasp.

For some unexplained reason Lord Cranmore shrank from the severe taunt.

He was silent and motionless for some time, and when he spoke again his tone had a strange subdued submission in it.

"You wrong me, Gilbert, and you have deceived me, if not both of us. But it is no time for argument when her precious life is at stake. How—where did you find her?"

"I stopped the mad brute on whom you had placed her," returned the young man, "but not till she had fallen senseless from her seat. She had held on bravely till the last, and her strength could bear no more."

"What can we do? Some help should be obtained. We cannot let her remain thus," pleaded the young nobleman.

It was strange to note the deference of his manner. Perhaps it was the influence of a strong mind over a weaker one. In any case the heir of a marquis and the favoured lover of that fair girl should scarcely have been cowed even by a fiercer nature than his own.

"Go and find help, then. I shall not leave her," replied Gilbert, doggedly. "It is I who have done all to preserve her. You have no claims to keep her from me, and make me your lacquey."

For a brief moment Lord Cranmore hesitated. The instincts of love and pride and jealousy all warred within him. But a deeper feeling and a hidden bond were enough to break that spell. Quickly and silently he moved from the spot. There were steps approaching, summoned, perhaps, by the shrill cry that had escaped Gwenda ere she fell, and in the distance the horses' feet of Lord Saville and his sister came cantering along. He hastened towards the direction of the pedestrian new comers. Either he believed more in their power to help, or else he fancied they were at hand, or the presence of strangers was to be preferred. In any case he rushed along to the path that seemed to lead to their approach, and in a few minutes he was lost to view in his headlong speed.

Gilbert turned once again to the girl, who, as yet, had given no signs of life. He clasped her yet more tightly to his bosom, as if the recent interview had but awakened more powerfully his passionate love and anxiety.

"My own, my beautiful!" he cried, impetuously. "Better like this than see you the bride of that heartless, vain son of a proud and haughty father. No, no, it shall not, it cannot be. Bernard Cranmore shall never win your angel self," he murmured softly, pressing his lips to the cold brow.

Was it the touch or the words, the name he breathed, that recalled the dormant life?

The eyelashes quivered directly he raised his head from the sweet face. And then there was a convulsive sobbing of the lips, and at last a faint murmur from the voice he loved so well.

He bent down anxiously to catch the sound.

"Bernard, dear Bernard," came faintly on the ear that loathed the very name.

And then she opened her eyes, and gazed wildly around her, as if perplexed at the position in which she was found.

Gilbert anxiously watched the progress of her re-animation.

"What is it? Are you hurt? Are you better, dear Gwenda?" he whispered, softly.

Even in his jealous anger he knew full well that it was impossible to conquer her love for his rival by harsh reproaches at that moment.

"I do not know; I think not," she said, trying to raise herself and collect her senses. "Only here," she went on, pressing her hand to her heart. "It aches, and I think my foot is hurt; but I shall soon be well."

Then, as her mind gradually recalled the last scene before she had lost her recollection, also flushed even in her faint and pained condition.

"Where is—I mean, where are the others?" she asked, suddenly. "Did the horse come far? Was it hurt?"

"The brute deserved to be killed," he replied, in a vehemence that it relieved him to vent in a more safe and innocent manner. "To think of his endangering your life! But he has fared better than he deserved; he is uninjured, and only careering about somewhere till he can be caught and punished."

"Then who stopped him?" she said, anxiously, her large eyes still glaring eagerly around as if in search of some one not within view.

"I had that happiness; do not grudge it to me," he said, earnestly.

She shrank for a moment from the passionate look, and the involuntary pressure of the form he was still supporting.

"I thank you from my heart, Mr. Dorrington. I owe you my life, I suppose," she said, timidly. "I hope it was not at any injury to yourself. You are not hurt, I trust?"

There was a cold constraint in the tone that irritated Gilbert past forbearance.

"Yes, perhaps; but not as you, I suppose, would convey, Miss Loraine. There are other wounds far more deep and incurable than a broken limb," he said, with a haughty disdain in his tone that was scarcely reconcilable with the impetuous tenderness of his former manner.

Gwenda was either herself hurt at the childish harshness, or else her physical weakness returned on her, after the exertions she had made.

Her eyes closed again in weary exhaustion, and her head dropped on his shoulder with a languid powerlessness that changed again his strange and varying mood.

"Forgive—forgive me!" he said. "I know not what I say. It is but the very agony of wounded love that fevers and maddens me. Only look up; say that you are not angry, that you pardon, that you believe me, my Gwenda."

She did open her eyes languidly, with a weary impatience.

"Yes, yes; only leave me, let me be at peace. I am—so—tired!" And again the flickering senses seemed to dim in the expiring strength, and she once more fairly fainted away.

Gilbert groaned in absolute despair and helplessness, but luckily at the moment rapid steps were heard, and the next instant Lord Cranmore and two men appeared bearing a kind of impromptu litter, made

of the broad trunk of a felled tree, over which they had thrown some boughs and coats, and all that could be devised of comfort for the sufferer.

There were scant words exchanged between the cousins.

Gilbert dared not interfere where Gwenda's very life was at stake.

And Lord Cranmore seemed utterly to ignore the presence of the offending rival during the brief arrangements for the still unconscious girl's relief.

"Good Heavens! what is all this?" exclaimed Lady Maud, as she and Lord Saville galloped up to the spot guided at once by the cry they had heard and the sight of the little throng.

"Gwenda, my poor darling. Oh, Bernard, what have you done? Surely she is not dead—she is not dead!" she wailed, as her eyes fell on Gwenda's white face and rigid form.

"No, no. She spoke just now," said Gilbert, hoarsely; "but if so, I know who has killed her," he went on, abruptly.

And the next moment he rushed away with a bitter feeling in his spirit that dared not trust itself longer with others lest it might break out to the destruction of every hope.

"He shall pay for it—he shall pay for it," he murmured. "I know him—yes, where others do not yet. He shall suffer for it to his very heart's core, unless I am deceived, and he is more worthy than I believe. And, if so, what then? He may—may save me from myself," he muttered.

It was a despairing, heart-felt prayer. Was it heard—was it remembered in after days of temptation and trial?

That was a problem that no human, fallible creature would dare to decide, even when their own will, their own future hung on the solution. Meanwhile he was well-nigh forgotten by the anxious group he had left.

"I will ride off for a doctor if you will tell me the nearest and the best to fetch," said Lord Saville, apparently the first to regain his self-possession. "Cranmore, you had better accompany Miss Lorraine and your sister home; while I ride off as fast as possible. My horse is the best, I know, and I will not spare him."

A few brief directions were given, and the young man rode off at a pace which was almost rapid enough even for Bernard's wishes.

"It is strange how she reminded me of some face I know, as she lay there in that dead faint," was the young nobleman's reflections, as he pursued his course. "It never struck me before. I suppose it was the rigid whiteness that altered her. How do I recall even now the haunting likeness she brought back! It is far—far back in the vista of years, that is certain."

And he dismissed the troublesome idea, and again abandoned himself to the urgent mission he had undertaken.

Ere he reached his destination the patient was being carefully borne to the house the little party had left so recently in health and strength, accompanied by those who loved her as well and truly as perhaps the time and circumstances of their intimacy would permit.

Gwenda was soon conveyed to her apartment, under the care of her own maid and Mrs. Fenton, in Lady Brunton's absence.

And before the doctor arrived she was safely in bed, restored to some dim consciousness, but evidently still suffering from some deeper cause than mere alarm would have occasioned for her swoon.

"There is some hurt to the head, I fancy," said the doctor, after a minute examination. "Still I do not anticipate more than a feverish attack as the result, and some days' perfect quiet as a remedy. I will ask you, madam, to pay the strictest attention to my order in that respect," he went on, addressing Mrs. Fenton, "and to exclude all from the room who might be likely in any way to agitate my patient."

Doctor Selby took his leave after these oracular orders, promising to return that evening, and Mrs. Fenton assumed her post in the dressing-room adjoining the sick chamber.

"Surely my young lady will not die, ma'am. You are not afraid of that?" said Linford, the maid who had waited on Gwenda ever since her accession to her

"No, I do not. It is only the shock. I hope you will not spread any foolish reports that might get to Mr. Bolton's ears, Linford," she replied, rather sharply.

"No, ma'am, certainly not. He might be angry that she had been trusted with such young people. I believe he is very fond of my young lady, and would be in a sad way if anything happened to her," returned Linford, significantly.

"Certainly. It would be a very sad thing, now that she has come into such a large fortune," observed Mrs. Fenton, with her usual unmoved composure.

"And likely to have a larger still, if I am not very foolish in my notions," remarked Linford. "I never saw any one much fonder of any young lady than I believe Lord Cranmore is of Miss Lorraine, and, of course, there can't be any difficulty when she is so rich."

"Hem! I do not know that the marquis may not look for rank as well as money," said Mrs. Fenton, "but, of course, it is not for me to say. Hush! I fancied I heard her move," she added, rising and going to the patient's bedside.

But if so Gwenda had again closed her eyes, and Mrs. Fenton quietly resumed her place.

That evening, however, the chaperone wrote a long letter, which she herself conveyed to the post-bag in the hall immediately before its departure. And to whom it was directed was a secret confined to her own knowledge and that of the post-master at Ross.

CHAPTER XXII.

Go, tune your voices' harmony,
And sing I am her lover;
Strain loud and sweet that every note
With sweet content may move her.
And she that hath the sweetest voice
Tell her I will not change my choice.
Yet still methinks I see her frown.

"MAUDIE dear, how long have I been ill?" asked Gwenda, when some week or ten days afterwards the marquis's daughter was admitted to her friend's apartment for the first time.

"Oh, not many days, dear, and you are all right again now, the doctor says," was the cheery reply.

"Indeed I should have been here long ago, only that Bernard was jealous of my seeing you so much the first," she went on. "And Doctor Selby had a faint notion, I suppose, that we were not born for mutes, like your worthy chaperone, and that I was to be guarded against accordingly."

Gwenda gave a faint smile. But certainly if the blush that warmed her soft cheeks could be trusted, she was neither in a very dangerous state of health nor distressed in mind.

"Come, you do not look very ill, that's certain," laughed Lady Maud. "Why, Gwenda, you are prettier than ever, I do believe. I have a great mind to get a fall also as a refresher to my beauty. Your eyes are so bright, and your complexion something unearthly in its transparency."

"Don't be so silly, Maud," said the girl, while a shy smile betrayed the pleasure that the graceful flattery occasioned.

"Silly or not, it is the truth," resumed the Lady Maud, quickly. "I am not given to falsehoods or romances, Gwenda. You are beautiful, and, what is more, you possess the gifts of fascination. You can inspire love; that is a wonderful blessing, is it not?"

Gwenda raised herself from the sofa pillows on which she was lying.

"Maud, you are talking wildly," she said. "What can you mean? Are you not as superior to me in almost all the endowments of nature and fortune as is possible? You at least have nothing to fear or to envy."

Lady Maud gave an impatient gesture.

"You think not, Gwenda; you are false—false or most cruelly mistaken," she said, vehemently.

"I do not comprehend you," replied the young heiress, half-timidly. "Maud, you are rich, beautiful, the daughter of noble parents, and, by your own showing, the betrothed of a noble suitor. What in the world can you want more?"

There was a look of deep sadness over the girl's face that somewhat moved the pity even of the somewhat wayward invalid.

"Maudie, what is the matter? Can you not trust me—your friend, your Gwenda?" she said, in a soft, pleading tone.

"Why should I?" exclaimed Lady Maud, impatiently.

"You say that there can be nothing for me to be aggrieved in—that I am happy, ay, and more than happy. It is impossible to argue in such a case. I can do as I am, without sympathy—without the least confidence. I can rely on myself alone."

Gwenda was silent.

What could she expect or hope from one so changed in her ideas, so mysterious, and so wilful?

"Is Lord Saville still here?" she asked, quietly, after a pause.

"Yes," was the brief reply. "Why should he not?"

"For no reason in the world that I can give," was the answer. "But that it seems a long time since he came."

"It is not quite a fortnight," said Lady Maud, coldly, but much has happened in it. It seems more like months than weeks."

"And are you engaged to Lord Saville?" asked Gwenda, quietly.

"If I am, what then?" asked Maud, in return.

"Only that you must be happy—that is all," sighed

the girl. "Maud, you have every gift that is possible within your grasp, and you wonder I should envy you."

"Don't you remember the fairy tales we used to read as children where one gift was wanting?" said Maud, bitterly, "where the good genii had yet some strange inability to save from misery. Suppose it were so with me. Suppose it is love that is the missing ingredient, what then?" she said.

"I thought you disregarded such a sentiment—that you reckoned wealth and station were enough," returned Gwenda, earnestly.

"Really you are as bad as a governess, Gwenda, and remember every word one says," replied Maud, fretfully; "but suppose I did, and suppose it is a mistake. Is it anything very wonderful?"

"And can you not love him—Lord Saville, I mean? Poor Maud," said Gwenda, with a soft pity in her tone.

She could realize such a grief.

She could imagine what it would have been if she did not love Bernard, or, yet more, had she been bound to marry Gilbert Dorrington when yet so strongly disinclined to such a union. She literally shivered with horror at the bare idea of such misery.

"Perhaps that is it," returned Maud, carelessly.

"Yes. Of course. There can be no other explanation—none to the dilemma."

Her eyes were fixed earnestly on the invalid. But there was nothing in Gwenda's expression or manner that could contradict the words she had uttered.

"But," returned the young heiress, gently. "Is it really a necessity, this marriage? Can you not refuse? Must you take him against your will? I could not endure such a fate. I would die first, Maudie."

Lady Maud gave a half-scornful smile.

"So would I. But suppose it is not against my will, what then? You see there is such a thing as being content with what is given to us. And even if it is as you say perhaps I might still make myself very comfortable as Lady Saville."

"Then I have done," answered Gwenda, slowly. "I beg your pardon. No doubt I misunderstood you, Maud."

"Very likely," was the reply.

And for some minutes there was silence between the two girls, during which it would have been a difficult study to read the hearts of one or both the young creatures, so near in age, so like in beauty and in fortune, and yet with thoughts and ideas so widely diverse.

At length Maud broke the pause.

"Do you know one reason that brought me to-day was to please Bernard, to bring you a message from him, to be a go-between in fact?" she added, with a rather sarcastic smile.

"It was surely unnecessary," said Gwenda, coldly.

"Perhaps, but it is promised, and I will not break my word," continued Maud. "Do you know, Gwenda, that Bernard is in love with you? I suppose it is not necessary to inform you of that."

The girl's suffused face was certainly a sufficient reply.

And Maud gave a half-bitter, impatient gesture as she saw the involuntary betrayal of emotion.

"Well," she went on, "as that is evidently an understood thing, I am spared further trouble. I need only add that Bernard has told mamma and papa, and that—as I have been a good girl, they consider—he is to benefit by my works of supererogation in a sort of Papistical manner, and in consequence he is to do as he wishes and take the wife he wants without let or hindrance from papa or mamma."

"It is very flattering to me," was Gwenda's first impulse to exclaim.

It was almost past flesh and blood to receive such a consent as a boon only to be purchased at the great sacrifice of another's happiness.

"Maud, surely this is not your motive. If it is, then," she nerved herself to say, "I would rather give up all than make you miserable. If Lord and Lady Brunton do not like me, or approve of your brother's choice, let all be at an end; I should be miserable with such a consciousness."

Lady Maud gave a deep, almost convulsive sob that was veiled under the cover of a sigh.

"Don't be a goose, Gwenda," she said, hastily, "I have so far consented now that I cannot draw back. And, as to the reasons, they do not signify if I am satisfied."

"But I do not understand your brother," said Gwenda, coldly enough. "Surely it is a very strange way of informing me of his wishes, or expecting me to reply."

"It is a natural and certainly very flattering impatience of Bernard's," returned Maud, rather coldly. "He is so anxious you should know, and tell him all. And, to speak the truth, papa and mamma are rather formal in their ways, and would not have anything done except in the most regular style."

And although they have, I suppose, given their full consent to Bernard's proposing to you, they would be dreadfully shocked at his venturing to make it known till it can be done in full and open salons, after you are well again; that is the explanation. You can surely understand and forgive such irregularities, Gwenda," she added, reproachfully.

"Then they do consent, and he sent you to tell me," murmured the girl, softly.

"Yes, decidedly; that is the state of affairs," was the reply, given in a rather haughty tone of voice and with a slight drawing up of the slender throat.

Gwenda was silent for a few minutes. Her eyes were closed, her head resting on the soft cushions in an attitude of delicious repose.

The white figure and face were a study for an artist in its sweet, rapt, happy visions that seemed floating before the mind's eye.

"It is so strange," she murmured. "Oh, Maudie, why are not you as happy as I am? Why can you not love Lord Saville as I do your brother? It would be so delicious then."

"Better as it is, I suppose," returned Lady Maud, lightly. "Perhaps I have no such power. Perhaps I am not given to love and such nonsense, Gwenda. I daresay we shall go on remarkably well, because we shall not expect more than we are likely to find; while I suppose you and Bernard will have such a fool's paradise in your heads that nothing will content you. I do not care to love a husband more than I do Lord Saville, for my part," she continued, scornfully.

"You do not! Oh, Maud," exclaimed Gwenda.

"No, I do not," she said, firmly, "and if he is as well satisfied I do not complain. Now I must go," she said, suddenly, as if wishing to change the subject, "or I shall get a lecture, and Bernard will declare I have thrown him back a week by exciting you so much, and thus prolong his penance. Ah, it is extremely comical. What nonsense you people talk who pretend to be in love," she went on, with a light, scornful laugh. "Lord Saville and I are much wiser in our generation."

And, with a hearty kiss and a playful shake of the head, she danced out of the room.

"How gay and happy she is!" thought Gwenda, sinking back on her cushions, somewhat exhausted, it might be, by the agitating dialogue. "And no wonder, for all is so plain and prosperous in her destiny, while I, after all, have always a mystery hanging like a cloud over my life. Yet would I change with her, and risk the loveless marriage she is about to make? No, a thousand times, no!"

Had she seen the sudden change that came over the young girl's face when she had once closed herself in her own chamber—had she heard the deep sigh that escaped her lips, there might have been a different opinion of Lady Maud Dorrington's happiness. The fasciae of Sholto Saville sank down on a chair by her fireside, and, covering her face with her hands, burst into a passion of half-resentful, half-sad tears.

"Wiser," she repeated, "wiser! Heaven help us both. But I have promised, and I will perform. And the young and—shall I say it?—fair Viscountess Saville need surely not be pitted by the world."

She sprang up, and, drying her tears, she gazed at her fair form in the glass.

"I am not so lovely as Gwenda, perhaps, but yet I am beautiful," she murmured. "Why should he despise such a bride—the nobly born and young? Well, well, we shall see. I, at least, will not flinch from the ordeal, nor betray even woman's weakness."

CHAPTER XXIII.

The seas are quiet when the winds give o'er,
So calm are we when passions are no more,
For then we know how vain it was to boast
Of fleeting things, too certain to be lost.
Clouds of reflection from our younger eyes
Conceal that emptiness which age desires.

It was perhaps some hour or two after the interview between the young girls so strangely connected alike in companionship and in the prospects that awaited them.

Maud had brushed away the tears which for a brief space had stained her fair cheek, and descended to the room which, once a schoolroom for her childhood, was now newly and luxuriously fitted up as a boudoir for her more advanced girlhood.

There was no evidence of emotion in her face. Its usual gay and sparkling vivacity flashed from her eye and played round her lips.

It might be that she was too young and too light-hearted for even an anxiety to prey on her heart, or that her nature had more firmness than could have been expected, and that she was bravely defying the fate which she had freely and knowingly accepted as her own.

Yet there was a kind of nervous tremor in her

whole aspect and mien that forbade either hypothesis. And when, some five minutes after her entrance, a faint rustle was heard, and a low voice whispered, "Maud, Cousin Maud," a thrill ran through her frame utterly disproportioned to the simple visit of a familiar brother-cousin.

"Gilbert, what in the world could induce you to come in this extraordinary fashion?" she exclaimed, half-angrily, when at last Mr. Dorrington came through the French window into the room and, closing it carefully after him, stood before her, with a sort of gloomy wildness in his look which might certainly justify alarm.

"Simply because I wished to speak with you alone, to ask you one question, and to bid you farewell," he returned, gloomily.

"Farewell! Why, Gilbert, you are raving. It is not the time for Oxford yet, and till you go there what on earth have you to do?" she said, in a real astonishment, which almost amounted to alarm for his intellect.

He laughed scornfully, as he remarked her timid surprise.

"Oh, you need not be frightened, Maud; I am not in the least mad," he said, carelessly, throwing his cap on the floor by the sofa where he sat. "But there has been perhaps enough to make me so," he added, bitterly. "Maud, is it true that your brother—that Bernard intends to marry Gwenda Lorraine, and that your parents have assented to the engagement?"

"And if it is, what then?" she inquired, in a subdued tone.

"Then I shall act accordingly," he said, calmly.

"Maud, I have grown up with you like your own brother from childhood. I surely can trust you with the secret of my heart, and," he went on, fiercely, "it matters little whether you betray me or not, it is all one to me."

Maud could read him better than she would have done a few short weeks before.

"You mean that you love her, Gilbert," she said, in a subdued voice.

"Worship—idolize her," he exclaimed, fervently. "Maud, I have no more hopes or wishes in life when she is another's. I shall not return to the Hove for many a long year."

"It will be changed indeed," murmured Lady Maud. "I shall be away also, it may be, Gilbert."

"Yes, to make way for the bride," he returned, bitterly. "However, that is nothing to the purpose, Maud. I am satisfied now, and I have but to bid you farewell. Heaven bless you, and—if I can say it—her also."

He stooped down to give her a farewell kiss. But the girl started back in a species of surprised repugnance.

"Gilbert, that is actual folly. Where are you going? What can you expect if you offend all your best friends thus?" she said, earnestly.

"I care not—I expect nothing," he returned. "It will only dull the pain to have a fiercer pang, if it were possible. Do not attempt to detain me, Maud, let me go and struggle as I may. Hardships, ay, and misery may do their work; I am content."

Lady Maud still hesitated.

"Suppose you were needed—suppose trouble or illness overtook her or us," she asked, "would not you repent your rashness, Gilbert?"

"No," he replied, vehemently. "No. It is no part of my birthright to devote my life to proud ingrates like them. And you, yes, you are thoughtless and, like all the daughters of prosperity, blunted and insensible to sorrow. That does not touch you."

As he spoke his eyes suddenly rested on her half-averted face.

Its expression seemed to startle him from his pre-occupation.

"Maud, it is possible that you are not happy, you, in the very heyday of all that is the most desired by your sex?" he went on, sarcastically. "You are going to marry rank and wealth by your own choice. You need not complain, you cannot sympathize with me. I do not ask it—I want no pity. Farewell, Maud. It is better that I should go, lest worse misery happen."

And ere she could even utter a word, in her half-stunned bewilderment, he was gone.

She felt strangely desolate as he disappeared. Not that her nature and his had ever sympathized. But there was something in him that gave her an idea of support, help in time of need, that she never felt where her own brother was concerned—still less in the suitor who should have taken the place of all others in her heart.

Meanwhile Gilbert hastily rushed to his room, packed up such articles as he most needed and gave directions to a servant as to the rest of his wardrobe and belongings to be forwarded to London.

Then, without one word of adieu to any other member of the household, he leaped on the horse that

had been a birthday present from the marquis, and rode off in the direction of the station.

Yet as he passed the park gates his resolution wavered.

Once and again he looked back at the house that had been the home of his early years, and which now held all that was dearest to him in the world.

"Shall I desert her now, when she is blindly rushing on her fate?" he muttered, pulling the bridle rein so suddenly that the horse reared on his haunches, and then darted off at a pace which his master could not for the moment check.

On small things the destinies of a life, ay, and of many lives turn.

And that accidental waywardness of the high-couraged animal decided Gilbert Dorrington's present course and the future career of himself and more than one connected with him in heart and in blood.

Ere another half-hour had passed he was in an express train, whirling away to Shrewsbury on route for—he scarcely knew where—anywhere to escape from himself, and from the memories that haunted him, the evil and the jealousies and resentments that he knew would rankle and fester in his nature till time or stern self-control should calm and deaden the fire into ashes.

There was some time yet to elapse before the train connecting the line with one starting for either Liverpool or London would leave, and Gilbert lounged into the refreshment-rooms to pass away the delay in taking what even a pre-engrossed and sorrowful brain must require to support the more physical system.

There was only one other person in the room at the moment. And perhaps from that circumstance, or the very weariness of his own miserable fancies brooding on themselves, Gilbert's attention seemed especially attracted to him.

He was sitting on one of the side sofas, with a small, worn-looking bag at his side, and his eyes fixed on the doorway with the air of a person who was anxiously expecting the advent of some one for whom he was especially waiting.

Gilbert had thus time to study his whole appearance and features while yet himself quite unobserved.

He was a thin, rather shrunken individual, whose whole aspect bore the marks alike of a hard and severe life or else a wearying illness which had absolutely drained, as it were, the very juices and springs of life. Yet the limbs were firm and vigorous, the frame almost painfully spare, and yet with muscles that were rather developed than weakened, as it would seem, by the utter absence of the flesh that ought to have covered and concealed their knotted lines.

Gilbert Dorrington caught himself speculating on the antecedents and the rank of the individual in question.

He was shabbily dressed, and all belonging to him bore marks of toil and hardships, and still there was something in the eyes and in the whole expression and bearing of the man that had not precisely the stamp of plebeian or of ignoble birth and breeding.

Gilbert was perplexed. He felt a most unaccountable, even absurd desire to know the sound of the man's voice and judge from his manner how far the anomalies of his appearance might be justified or explained by his words or manner.

"They are a long time bringing in my simple dinner," he said, at last, when the stranger's eyes turned earnestly in his direction. "Are you in the same case—waiting for refreshments?"

"If no," exclaimed the stranger, with a kind of start, as if astonished at being addressed.

The voice was somewhat harsh and cracked, but still the accent and the tone had certainly no coarseness in it.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," returned Gilbert. "I thought perhaps you were being detained like myself, and going to while away the time in the same agreeable manner."

The man laughed rather sarcastically.

"You do not know as I do the possibility of being long without food or rest," he said. "I am inured to such things, as you may imagine," and he glanced at his own worn, brown hands, that certainly seemed as if many a hard day's labour had been won out of their firm muscles.

"There is no knowing what may be done by any of us, except by experience," replied Gilbert; "but still we generally imagine that where there is hard living and hard work it ruins the health and shortens life."

"Scarcely so much as luxury and idleness," replied the man, sarcastically. "But I ought not to speak so freely when most likely I am addressing one born to their possession."

And his eyes fell on the thick rug and the brassy-mounted Russia leather bag, the silver-tipped cane

and other trifles that lay by the young man, and spoke, as well as his dress, of wealth and refinement. Gilbert's answer was stopped by the entrance of the waiter and the dinner he had ordered, which was certainly good enough to justify the delay.

"Will you not join me?" he said, kindly, to the stranger. "We are, I should suppose, fellow-travellers, and if you will share my simple dinner I should be glad, even at the risk of the luxury you reprobate," he added, smilingly.

The man gave a faint response to the smile of the young host.

"You are very kind, sir. I am poor, though not exactly penniless," he said; "and if I do accept your kindness it is rather because it is pleasant to find such a friendly welcome on returning to old England."

"Then you have been abroad?" asked Gilbert, as he assisted the stranger to some of the edibles.

"Yes," was the curt reply. "I have. Things are much changed since I went away; and it will no doubt be the same when I shall meet or look for the friends I have left behind me. It is enough to make one regret a return," he added, bitterly.

Gilbert grew interested in spite of his own pre-engrossed ideas.

"Then you have friends—relations in your own country?" he asked. "Have you not had news of them during your absence?"

"Perhaps," returned the stranger; "at any rate I can do without such poor, weak consolation if necessary. And my first chief errand here is for a friend, who has commissioned me to ascertain the condition of some very dear to him. Perhaps you can direct me, sir, to what I want to find," he continued, hesitatingly.

"I can scarcely tell, unless you give me some better clue than such vague words, my friend," Gilbert replied, with a half-amused, inquisitive smile.

"Oh, nothing very difficult, sir. I daresay there are law lists that will tell me all I am anxious to ascertain," observed the stranger. "It is a gentleman of the name of Bolton, whom my friend sent me to find. And, as ill luck will have it, the letters he gave me and directions to him and some other people are all at the bottom of the sea. I was overtaken in a shipwreck, you see, sir, and that swept away everything I had, or I should scarcely present the appearance that may well shock you," he went on, with a strange, covert smile.

Gilbert Dorrington was somewhat perplexed at his manner.

Was he mad, or an imposter, or an unlucky, simple-minded refugee returning from a long and unfortunate absence from his native land? In any case he felt a remarkable interest in the desolate stranger.

"You are right," he said, kindly, "if Mr. Bolton is a lawyer, he must be easily discovered. And if you need funds, my good friend, I will be happy to assist you, as far as my own slender means will allow. I am but a struggling man myself, but I have still a few pounds to bestow on one more needy and helpless than I am in purse or health or friends."

(To be continued.)

THE BLUE GUM IN THE GARDEN.—The species varies considerably in habit and the shape of its leaves, for I have grown several distinct forms under the same name. The one I have grown during the last two years has dark green lanceolate foliage, about two inches in length. I have grown it both in pots and the open ground without any difficulty whatever. There are many plants better deserving the gardener's attention than the Eucalyptus; nevertheless one or two plants may be grown with advantage. I have found it useful for cutting from, as the small tender branches are well adapted for mixing with cut flowers in vases, especially during the winter season. The leaves, when passed through the hand, or bruised in any way, emit a very pleasant myrtle-like odour. If a few of those planted out during the summer are lifted in the autumn and potted, and kept in a cool greenhouse, they will be found useful for cutting from during the following winter. To raise a stock of plants is easy enough. The seed is sown in shallow pans, which are placed on a hotbed, and immediately the plants are large enough to handle they are potted off separately, and when nicely established they are removed to the greenhouse. Thrips are especially partial to the foliage, and if they are kept in a high temperature and suffer from dryness at the root, the leaves will soon be attacked with this pest. As an instance of the rapidity of growth of the blue gum, even in this country, I will just mention that the tallest of my plants attained a height of ten feet in twelve months from the time the seed was sown. It bloomed with me in March last, but the flowers were of no beauty, being of small size and of a greenish-white. The plants soon became leggy and bare at the bottom, and I

would strongly advise those who intend growing it to raise a stock from seed every year. In kind climates, such as Cornwall and Devonshire, it would probably do exceedingly well, and attain a considerable height before cut down by the frost, as it will most likely live through a mild winter.—G. M.

THE ALBERT MEDAL.

THE Council will proceed to consider the award of the Albert Medal for 1874, early in May next. This medal was instituted to reward "distinguished merit in promoting Arts, Manufactures, or Commerce," and has been awarded as follows:

In 1864, to Sir Rowland Hill, K.C.B., "for his great service to Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, in the creation of the penny postage, and for his other reforms in the postal system of this country, the benefits of which have, however, not been confined to this country, but have extended over the civilized world."

In 1865, to His Imperial Majesty, Napoleon III., "for distinguished merit in promoting in many ways, by his personal exertions, the international progress of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, the proofs of which are afforded by his judicious patronage of Art, his enlightened commercial policy, and especially by the abolition of passports in favour of British subjects."

In 1866, to Professor Faraday, D.C.L., F.R.S., for "discoveries in electricity, magnetism, and chemistry, which, in their relation to the industries of the world, have so largely promoted Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce."

In 1867, to Mr. (now Sir) W. Fothergill Cooke and Professor (now Sir) Charles Wheatstone, F.R.S., in "recognition of their joint labours in establishing the first electric telegraph."

In 1868, to Mr. (now Sir) Joseph Whitworth, F.R.S., LL.D., "for the invention and manufacture of instruments of measurement and uniform standards, by which the production of machinery has been brought to a degree of perfection hitherto unapproached, to the great advancement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce."

In 1869, to Baron Justus von Liebig, A. Associate of the Institute of France, Foreign Member of the Royal Society, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, etc., "for his numerous valuable researches and writings, which have contributed most importantly to the development of food-economy and agriculture, to the advancement of chemical science, and to the benefits derived from that science by Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce."

In 1870, to M. Ferdinand de Lesseps, "for services rendered to Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, by the realization of the Suez Canal."

In 1871, to Mr. Henry Cole, C.B., "for his important services in promoting Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, especially in aiding the establishment and development of International Exhibitions, the development of Science and Art, and the South Kensington Museum."

In 1872, to Mr. Henry Bessemer, "for the eminent services rendered by him to Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, in developing the manufacture of steel."

In 1873, to M. Michel Eugene Chevreul, "for his chemical researches, especially in reference to saponification, dyeing, agriculture, and natural history, which for more than half a century have exercised a wide influence on the industrial arts of the world."

THE library of the American Congress now contains 258,752 volumes, of which number 12,407 were added in the course of last year. The librarian reports the accessions to the library as unusually valuable, including an almost complete set of the county histories of England, purchased in London, and very important as throwing light upon the history and genealogy of thousands of American families. Besides the above, the library has about 50,000 pamphlets. In the copyright department there have been 15,352 entries made during the year, and the librarian has paid into the treasury the sum of 13,404 dollars as the receipt from copyright fees.

THE SWEETMEAT TRADE IN FRANCE.—The manufacture of bonbons is carried on all over France, and in Paris alone there are upwards of 200 shops, employing over 1,000 hands that are engaged in this industry. The men earn from 1:50 to 8:rs. per day, and the women from 1 to 4:rs. The manner in which liqueur bonbons are made is extremely simple. The sugar preparation, reduced to a fine powder, is spread over a tray, and upon this single drops of the liqueur are allowed to fall; the tray is then shaken, and the pulverized sugar forms a coating round the several drops of fluid, which can be increased at will to any thickness. The amount of indirect industry is enormous. The last published statistics show that the sweetmeat trade of France

exceeds 12 million francs. Perhaps the greatest marvel is to find that the country itself expends 10 millions of this sum.

GIGANTIC FIR.—A splendid specimen of a Scots fir, natural grown, was measured the other day in the Royal Forest of Ballochbuie. No accurate idea, of course, could be obtained, beyond a haphazard guess at its contents in solid feet; nor of its altitude, though the latter may be pretty safely stated at from 70 to 80 feet. The enormous circumference of the gigantic specimen was taken at 18 inches above the ground, where it measured 162 inches, or 13½ feet. Its existence, as may be imagined, is an exceptional rarity even in the Ballochbuie Forest—one of the finest, if not the very finest, stretches of Scots firs, in all Scotland. Its towering canopy—for it stands isolated—must have stood the rude blasts of centuries, though how many of the latter may be left is a question for the attention of some genius versed in the mysteries of forestry and woodcraft.

ALTHOUGH the wood pigeons are building their nests in the garden of the Tallieres, and the crows theirs in the pleasure ground of Rothschild in the Rue Lafayette, yet people are not reconciled to the belief that they have had their orthodox dose of winter. Perhaps never a winter seen in Paris so mild, and at the same time so fatal from its very clemency. Sickness is very general, and an inhabitant without some affection of the throat or lungs is as rare as a white blackbird, not as a white crow, since the Jardin d'Acclimation now breeds these curiosities. In Paul de Kock's pet suburb of Romainville, the lilacs are reported to be on the point of bursting into flower. The public gardens and promenades are being swept and garnished, receiving a "between-season" toilette, like the *entre-saison* fashion for ladies.

OBJECTS OF PITY.—There are many who would have the greatest sympathy for a crooked back who have none for a crooked temper; and thousands who would lead a blind man tenderly out of danger who cast stumbling-blocks in the way of one blinded by rage, or jealousy, or wounded pride, or by some in-born evil tendency over which he has no control. Yet the crooked temper is the worse affliction of the two, and the blindness of bad passions is a deeper darkness than any that ever veiled man's eyes. We suppose it very rarely occurs to any of us to say, "I am so grieved for him, he is in such a dreadful rage." Nay, there are people who strive to inflame a bad temper—who like to make him angry, or her jealous, "for the fun of it." In the name of all that is horrible, what "fun" can there be in seeing a demon fill a man's body? We should have pity for the wicked, pity for the evil-doer. Not the cold pity of one who stands afar and draws back his garment as from a leper, but a genuine pity for those who do wrong, for those who have evil tempers and raging passions; and like the judicious mother who, when her children quarrelled, put them to bed and administered some harmless bitter medicine for the "crossness," as though it had been whooping-cough or measles, let us regard ill-temper as a disease that afflicts our friend, and strive to accelerate his recovery.

A NEW USE FOR CHICKEN FEATHERS.—Chicken feathers are amongst those waste products of the farm of which no regular means of utilization has heretofore been suggested. Myriads of them are strewn over the barn yard, packed into the floor of the chicken-house, or are converted into positive nuisances by the wind, which bestrewn them over lawns and flower beds. But feathers may be easily prepared so as to render them very valuable. The operation is to cut the plume portions of the feathers from the stem, by means of ordinary hand scissors. The former are placed in quantities in a coarse bag, which, when full, is closed and subjected to a thorough kneading with the hands. At the end of five minutes, the feathers, it is stated, become dis-aggregated and felted together, forming a down, perfectly homogeneous and of great lightness. It is even lighter than natural eider down, because the latter contains the ribs of the feathers, which give extra weight. The material thus prepared is worth, and readily sells in Paris for about 8s. a pound. About 1:6 troy ounces of this can be obtained from the feathers of an ordinary sized pullet; and this on the above valuation, is worth about 10d. The chicken down is said to form a beautiful cloth when woven. For about a square yard of the material a pound and a half of down is required. The fabric is said to be almost indestructible, as, in place of fraying or wearing out at folds, it only seems to felt the tighter. It takes dye readily, and is thoroughly waterproof.

WHAT ARE YOU WORTH?—Young man, just leaving home, what are you worth? I fancy I see your face beaming with joy and satisfaction at the idea of leaving the parental roof. I perceive that you have not that which many of the sons of this world call

riches, but the glow of health is unmistakably visible in your face, and ambition says: "I, too, am here to further the designs of this young man." These surely are riches which no money can buy. Start right, young man, with these Heaven-given riches; let no robber enter your tenement of clay who shall rob you of these priceless gems. The paths leading from your dear old home will never be forgotten by you. There virtue and innocence walked as guardian angels with you, lest some ruthless hand should rob the parent stem of its choicest fruit. As you know more of the world you will inquire of yourself, "What am I worth?" The answer will be according to what you have been since you took a farewell of home and friends. If the course you have pursued has been the one your parents marked out for your following you are bound to congratulate yourself that you are worth no less to-day than when you clasped hands with the world and marched out to meet its stern realities; but if on the other hand you have tried to sail your craft without consulting the chart, you may ere long strike the rocks, and find the same grave that many another has found by experience and foolhardiness. In this world there is but one road to success. The way to true greatness and worth is not that which many of our wealthy men took when they started in life. To be sure they have attained riches, but wealth often comes through dishonesty and a train of other causes. The world calls men shrewd and sharp who get gain by vicious practices; but they who love the great Creator and fear not man are the only truly successful men; and when the opportunity comes they practise honesty and the right.

GEORGIE.

MISS GARNIER sat making hieroglyphics with the long handle of her parasol: another Ariadne writing in the sand, but, instead of bemoaning a recreant lover, hers was as loyal as the majority of men perhaps more thoroughly loyal than some who made greater protestations. She had brought his letter out with her, and had been reading it. Whether it was the epistle, the scene, the season, or her own heart, that gave her a little pang and secret longing for what she had not she could hardly have told. At twenty-seven she would have scouted the idea of being romantic.

The season was August, after a week of storm. The air had in it the crisp, breezy richness of September, and the sky was full of drifting clouds with a wonderful blue for background, and a sun with orange-red tints. Autumn always inspired her. She seemed to glow and dazzle in it with a strange brilliancy, like a ripening maple leaf. So there was nothing amiss with the season.

The scene was a long stretch of sea level with crested waves tramping up the sandy beach. At this point it was rather craggy and irregular, with rocks standing out in the water, looking like miniature islands—just the spot to dream away a hot summer day. Toward the north and east the beach was smooth and hard as a floor.

The westward-going sun burnished the rocks and made odd little Rembrandt effects of light and shade. She had been watching them, and wishing she were an artist; and then, as the long, graceful waves came racing and tumbling over the shining sand, she wished she were a poet. Would either have kept her from engaging herself to Leonard McArthur?

The secret is out with that. There was a smothered dissatisfaction continually smouldering until some wayward mood brought it to a sudden outburst of flame, and then at such times she always went off for a good long, solitary think. She took herself bravely in hand; said, in her straightforward way:

"Georgiana Garnier, you are much the same as other women—no genius, no great beauty, not remarkable in any way. Hundreds of such women marry when their time comes, live a pleasant, respectable life, and each drops into her grave at last much lamented, while her husband, if she leaves one, soon consoles himself with a new love. And so the world goes on."

She generally treated herself to the barest of commonplace. They were like a bitter, wholesome tonic. To-day they had not answered the purpose, or else she would have overleaped the barrier that ordinarily restrained her.

For she had fallen into an unusual retrospection of the past. Like a picture, one day ten years ago had risen up before her, and would not be thrust out of sight: He and she scrambling over rocks on the sea coast, only it was many miles away from here. She was seventeen, bright, winsome, full of fire and spirit—a girl to contest every inch of questionable supremacy, to try for the mastery, to despise weakness, but when conquered to yield in a grand, tender manner, to be sweeter than any promises she would ever make. If Burton Rollins could only

have understood her better, but love always is unreasonable.

They had scrambled and climbed; she had insisted on going this way, he that.

"I know this coast by heart," he said, impatiently. "I have travelled it since early boyhood. That path is too rough and dangerous for a woman."

She gave a scornful little laugh, and went on. He followed, of course, rather sulkily, until he saw her going into real danger, caught a glimpse of the stretched-out hand and imploring face, and when they came to their every-day senses he had her clasped in his arms, and was covering her face with kisses, and she was passionately bewailing her unworthiness, her temper, her impatience of restraint, and promising to become an angel for his sake.

Even now, after ten years, and much experience, she admitted there had never been any episode in her life like that. For a month she was perfectly happy. They had come to this rugged coast for the benefit of her father's health, and were staying at an hotel, while Burton Rollins lived in the town some distance from the beach, and was chief clerk in the thriving little bank—in fact, he was a young man who would make his mark anywhere. Mr. Garnier liked him, and consented to the engagement. Burton spent every leisure moment with his darling. They made no secret of their love—why should they?

There was one heart in the town filled with pangs of hate and envy. Mr. Rollins was a great favourite with Mr. Cummings, the bank manager, and for a year or two had lived in his house. There were two daughters, Blanche and Evelyn. Like their mother, they were fair and delicate, and admitted to be the leading beauties of the town. Rather haughty and exclusive, they had snubbed their neighbours who aspired to be lovers, and passed the bloom of girlhood on their parent stem. But Blanche Cummings had resolved to win Burton Rollins. In her narrow, selfish fashion, she loved him, and he bid fair to gain both wealth and position.

Miss Garnier troubled her head about no one. She cared nothing about acquaintances. She saw them occasionally in the elegant phaeton, or at church, but, not possessing a jealous temperament, she was satisfied with her lover's first explanation. Indeed, they were so different from anything she liked or admired, that she passed them by loftily.

The month came to an end.

Mr. Garnier, much improved, returned to London with his daughter. School days were over for Miss Georgie, so she had nothing to do but to make much of her father, write to her lover, and enjoy herself.

The engagement lasted eight months. During that time there had been two quarrels and two reconciliations, tender, passionate love, rarest and most satisfying happiness, and no little doubt and misery. Interviews would have been better than the letters, for the little misunderstandings could have been explained. Both were exacting and impatient, and perhaps somewhat arbitrary.

The third dispute proved fatal.

Mr. Rollins gave her an opportunity to concede certain points, which she proudly declined. He was quite convinced by this that their engagement was an unwise one, that it would not lead to permanent happiness, and that it would be wiser to break it now, instead of making themselves miserable for a lifetime.

She answered sharply and suddenly, agreeing with him. She would persuade no man to take her against his better judgment. By this time she had learned that with her charms she was not likely to go begging. Yet in her heart Georgiana Garnier fully believed that he would think better of it, that he would come back to her. So she went on her way carelessly, danced and smiled and flirted, and Burton Rollins heard of it.

"I thought she loved me," he said to himself, sadly. "I do believe I can never care so much for another woman, never; and yet it is like glimpses of heaven with the torments of purgatory. But if she had loved me, if she had sent one tender line—"

Early the following winter he married Miss Blanche Cummings. She had always hated the episode of her less fortunate rival. One day she ventured to sneer at her.

Burton Rollins's face was in a blaze.

"Don't do that," he said, in a husky tone. "Miss Garnier is nothing to you now. And you knew of this before I asked you to marry me."

"Miss Garnier never could have been anything to me, not even an acquaintance—a girl like that running round the world after lovers—"

"Do not make me regret that I did not marry her," and he looked steadily into his wife's face. She would hardly brave such eyes a second time.

He really had not meant to marry Miss Blanche. The greater part of the love-making had been on her side. She had caught his heart in the rebound, and

her soul was like her long, thin fingers, it held on tenaciously.

The newly-wedded couple remained at home. Rollins speculated with his father-in-law, became chairman of a railway, and member of Parliament. He was ambitious of distinction. It was rumoured afterward that he had been offered a fine position abroad, but that it was not accepted.

By this time Mr. Cummings was dead, and had left but little for his family, being heavily involved in speculation. Mr. Rollins's home was theirs. Being a sharp, shrewd, business man, with strong political leanings, a hearty, wholesome nature, genial among his masculine friends, but rather reserved at home, the women had it all their own way there, and he seldom interfered.

Miss Garnier's life had not been entirely uneventful. Rollins's marriage was a blow to her, but she would not own it.

"So much for a man's love, papa," she said, laughingly.

"I can hardly believe it. Let me see. Miss Cummings was one of those milk-white girls who used to ride about the beach. I'll venture that Burton has a termagant for a wife. I don't know why, Georgie, but I took an unusual liking to him. You are quite sure that you—"

and Mr. Garnier studied his daughter's face.

"I couldn't endure a tyrant. It is your fault; you have spoiled me, dear papa."

And she buried her face in his soft gray beard. Tears were so near, but he must not see them.

"No, my darling, I meant—you are a little hasty, you know; perhaps I have spoiled you," he returned, with half-regretful tenderness.

"Then if the young men will not marry me you will have to keep me all the days of your life."

And her gay laugh was enough to reconcile him to such an indiction.

But alone in her own room there was no brave smiling.

"I shall get over it in time," she said to herself. "People always do. And if he had truly loved me, he could not have married so soon."

There were two bright, happy years with her father. She was quite a belle, had lovers and offers in abundance, and then came her great loss and grief.

Mr. Garnier had not been a very prudent man, and Georgie had taken no heed for the morrow. She was left comfortable, but not rich. An income of five hundred pounds a year was assured to her, and some real estate that might in after years be very valuable.

She had a year of seclusion and sorrow, then she went abroad with her father's dearest friend and his wife, who was something of an invalid. Just before she went she received a paper containing Burton Rollins's speech on some question of the day. For an instant it thrilled her with the old joy, and then she remembered. He was nothing to her now.

She was past twenty-three when she returned from the Continent, a pretty, stylish, graceful woman, who spoke French and German like a native, sang and played unusually well, had written some fine art criticisms and quite entertaining letters. She was bright, vivacious, and possessed a peculiar fascination. Mrs. Keith, her father's sister, begged her to share her pleasant home.

"I shall be so glad to have you, Georgie," she said, with heartfelt warmth. "Now that Grace is married I feel absolutely lost, and am counting on the time when my grandchildren will be large enough to become companionable. I cannot endure living alone. Do come."

Mrs. Keith was possessor of a handsome mansion, where there was not much pretension but a good deal of comfort. Two female servants and a coachman were sufficient for her necessities. Georgie would fain have made some return, but her aunt over-ruled the idea.

So there she was, a young woman pleasantly situated, with no particular bent or genius, and no especial demand for exertion. If she could have painted a picture or written a poem—even a novel would have consoled her; but these three were beyond her. So she went into society, was brilliant, sweet, social and cold by turns, and, as the years went on, rather ennuied. She was admired, flirted a little, and had some very good offers of marriage, which she declined, to her aunt's great surprise.

Very few of her friends agreed about her. Some were extravagant in regard to her beauty, while others thought her almost plain. Expression did everything for her face, though her features were passable. But the wonderful lights and shades, the glow and earnestness, and above all the nobility of truth and honour, made her radiantly handsome at times.

Do you wonder if she remained single for the sake of an old girlish memory? She would have scouted the idea. It was simply because she had not loved any man, and so far had not been tempted by any-

thing else. Two or three had crossed her orbit whom she admired very much, but there had been a reason sufficient to keep her heart whole in every case.

She had never seen Burton Rollins since the last visit to her father's house when they had been extravagantly happy. She had heard of his addressing this or that meeting, and found that he carried considerable weight. Men spoke of him warmly. And one winter in Brighton a bevy of ladies were discussing him.

"I hope the Government will put him into some important and prominent position," said a fair, motherly woman. "Men of such talents and power ought not to be kept in the background. And he is so thoroughly honest and true."

"What a pity he did not accept the foreign appointment. Was it true that his wife would not let him, Mrs. Lindsey? You know all about them."

"I do suppose the real cause was her objection," was the slow reply.

"What a shame!"
"But what a splendid husband," exclaimed a pretty young girl. "I wish I was half in love with him last winter. Tell me, Mrs. Lindsey, is there the slightest chance?"

"I am afraid not," and Mrs. Lindsey shook her head. "I wish fate had been a little fairer with him. He is one of the men one longs to see perfectly happy."

"His wife is an invalid, is she not?"
"Then it was doubly kind in him to go," said the young enthusiast.

"Yes, Mrs. Rollins is an invalid. When I first knew her mother, which must be thirty years ago, people thought her in consumption. Blanche was very delicate all through her girlhood, and since the birth of her child has confined herself chiefly to the house."

"The prospect is that she will live for ever."
"Is she nice or pretty? How did he come to marry her?"

"It has puzzled me. Her family had a fine position in the town, and she was considered pretty, though very haughty. But a few years after the marriage her father died, leaving them quite poor, and Mr. Rollins has cared for them since."

"How kind of him! Are there many of them?"
"Mrs. Rollins's mother and her sister. And I have heard that once, when Mrs. Rollins was very ill, she made him promise to marry her sister, for the sake of her little girl."

"Then there is no hope for me. Oh, Miss Garnier, I wish you knew him. You seldom see such a man out of a book, and somehow he is just your style, too. Wouldn't she like him, Mrs. Lindsey? Do you not believe he will be in Brighton this winter?"

"It is very probable."
"Then she must see him."

Georgina Garnier steadied her countenance and smiled, but there was a great pang at her heart—the old feeling that she had no part nor lot in what concerned him. He had shut her out of his life.

Yet how noble and upright he must be to impress people as he did. If—she clenched her small hand and compressed her lips—he had loved her, she had loved him, they might have been happy; for to be ambitious for another would have given her life its greatest satisfaction. But it was all dust and ashes.

She was tired and dispirited when Leonard McArthur asked her to marry him. Aunt Keith had been politely tormenting her about marriage, and reminding her that in six months more she would be twenty-seven. Some day some one would badger her into matrimony, and she did like Mr. McArthur. They had been such good friends. He treated her like a sensible human being; argued a point with her coolly and calmly; was courteous, gentlemanly, honest; a man of some means, and in a good business, thirty-two or three years of age. He was matter-of-fact, but not commonplace. His love-making was like himself. If it had been more extravagant or demonstrative it would not have suited her so well. She wanted nothing to remind her of the old, sweet, lost youth.

"You think you like me?" she said, slowly, glancing at him out of her peculiar violet eyes, that had a sad light in them just now.

"Like! Why, if I was not sure that I loved you I should not speak," he answered, in amazement.

"I ought to tell you one thing before I allow you to go any farther. I am not—I mean that I have been—engaged before," she said, in greater confusion than she would have thought possible for her.

"Does that mean that your knowledge of men and the world is so thorough? Have you so little faith in us?"

"Oh, no, no," she said, with a sudden gesture of entreaty. "I am awkward at expressing myself. Some men desire a woman's first love; mine might have been unwise, but it was dear and sweet. I was

rash and headstrong, and the fault was no doubt largely mine. I wanted you to know."

"Thank you for the confidence. I suppose most women have some little episode before they are twenty; I think many men go from one fancy to another until they find a passion so strong that there is no farther desire to rove. In my youthful days I must confess to a few idle dreams that came to grief, but for years I have seen no woman whom I cared to marry until I met you."

"I wonder why you like me?" she asked, curiously. She never questioned Burton Rollins thus.

"Because you suit me. I should always honour you, trust you, confide in you. And is not this the foundation of the most enduring love?"

He looked so good and reliant in his manly strength and the beauty of sound health. She could depend upon him to the uttermost. A reasonably happy future lay before her. For the first time in her life she felt that she would be foolish not to take it.

They talked themselves into an engagement before the evening had ended. No feverish, exhausting passion here, no jealous doubt; a tranquil, useful life, with something to do—her great want.

Mrs. Keith was delighted. Mr. McArthur came and went in a charmingly friendly manner. To-day he brought some violets for Georgina's hair; to-morrow a tea-rose and a few geranium leaves for her snowy throat; then a book that he liked, or a piece of music that betrayed a cultivated taste. He was proud of her talent too, and besought her to use it, bringing some of his literary friends to visit her.

Towards the close of June, Mrs. Keith determined to go to the seaside, not feeling in her usual health.

"I remember a good many years ago that your dear father spent one summer at the seaside, and it did him so much good. You were just a slip of a girl, Georgina, and I dare say have forgotten it."

"No," Georgina replied, in a peculiar tone, startled by the thought that what if her aunt should want to go to the same place.

"Mr. McArthur hoped, my dear, that I would not take you very far away."

"Oh," and Georgina smiled. "I wish we could go to some quiet, unfashionable place, and just rest and recruit."

The desired spot was easily found. Two hotels, some boarding-houses, and plenty of summer residences were there.

They took their rooms for two months, though they could go up to London for a day or two whenever they chose. It was very delightful.

Mr. Keith made some charming acquaintances, and felt quite at home.

Georgina rode, sailed, took long rambles, and thought persistently of the destiny before her. She tried honestly not to think of the past, but never had it come before her so vividly: Her aunt in delicate health here at the seaside, not unlike her father in many respects, the wide, suggestive ocean on the one hand, the rides and rambles, and, most of all, the lover coming to share them with her.

Ten years had rolled between. Youth and joy, impulse and impatience were there; here maturer years, riper judgment, cooler blood, sense, judgment. Was it so? And did all these make amends for the daring, impetuous sweetness of inexperienced love?

She had received a thoughtful letter from Leonard McArthur that morning, in which he portrayed what their future life might be. He was a wise, judicious, far-sighted friend. Her life, her advancement, her pleasure was always the theme. The nobleness touched her strangely. She had been restless ever since, and gone out for a long walk by the breezy seashore, and then had come up the old life, the old love.

First she would not think of it, but administered to herself a practical reasoning of common sense. But after she sat down in this wild, out-of-the-way nook the remembrance of ten years ago rushed over her like a sudden summer storm. She saw all in the vivid flashes of light; she bent her head to the overwhelming gale, and shivered in the great reaches of gloom. That was love; this was a pure, high friendship.

"Oh, if she had been wiser in those days, sweeter and more generous! If she could go back and confess! It would not be hard to say 'I was wrong, impatient, unreasonable. I will do as you wish.' How many times she had been humble to Leonard with no quarrel. Then she asked herself in all solemnity if she had any right to marry Mr. McArthur while so much of her soul and her memory were linked with another. He deserved the best and she could not give him that. She had tried honestly to shake off this influence, but it had been growing surely and silently all the summer. Its very hopelessness gave it a kind of tenacity. It would never die until she was cold in her grave. Perhaps she had a weak, earthly longing that in the other country all things might be explained.

Something startled her. There was a tramping about in the rocks overhead, and a subdued whistling that was not a bird. Most of the sportsmen had returned to the town, and it was seldom any one invaded this retreat. Ah! an old song, old as the hills, one that her father loved and she used to sing, floated over to her fragmentarily:

"But while I've thee before me,
With heart so warm and eyes so bright,
No clouds can linger o'er us,
Thy smile turns them all to light."

The sound ceased there. She leaned her chin in the palm of her hand, and a tear dropped at her feet. There was such a strange, solemn stillness. Had the intruder gone?

He had turned the ledge of rock, and was standing transfixed as his eyes wandered over the face thus suddenly revealed to him. How little it had changed! The fair skin, the drooping bronze-brown lashes, the soft pink cheeks, the broad chin with its dimple, the mouth that was so sweet and could be so disdainful, the straight, proud nose, the turn of the white neck, and the floating hair, were just as he had seen them dozens of times! He had only to clamber down, to clasp her in his arms, and cry:

"Oh, Georgina, my darling. Were you waiting for me?"

With the first impulse he gave two great strides, and she sprang up in alarm. He stood before her blushing and confused, and stammered out:

"Your pardon, madam! Oh, Miss Garnier! What a surprise!"

"Mr. Rollins!" and she bowed her head with haughty composure.

Then he saw that she had changed. The eager, impulsive girl was an elegant, reticent woman. How much did she remember—what had she forgotten?

"How odd that we have never met before!" he exclaimed. "Several times I have just missed you. I had some friends who were very enthusiastic about you."

"Indeed," she answered, calmly, and raised her eyes.

"She has been turning to marble all these years," he thought to himself. "No man has ever had the courage, or sufficient knowledge to strike the decisive blow, and shiver the composure to fragments."

"Have you been spending the summer here?" he asked, catching at a straw.

"Yes, with my aunt."
"And you like it?"

"We came for quiet and sea air. It has answered our purpose admirably."

"You spend most of your time in London?"

"Yes. I have been residing with my aunt for several years. Papa died—"

"Yes, I know. And after that you went abroad. I had friends who met you in Switzerland."

"Ah," she answered, in an absent way, wondering why he had kept himself informed as to her doings.

"I saw an article from your pen not long ago. You have blossomed into a genius."

She smiled rather disdainfully. How well he knew that peculiar expression.

They went on with commonplace talk. There was a barrier between, everywhere. Could this man and this woman once have loved so madly?

In some unaccountable way the conversation veered round to matrimony. He expressed himself with a little bitterness. Was that not common with married men?

"You have been sensible," he declared, "especially if you wanted to do anything, make any mark in the world. Yet I suppose youth must have its foolish dreams."

"I hardly deserve your commendation," she answered, with a sort of silvery sharpness. "I am no genius, and have never aimed at so high a position. And candour compels me to confess that it is my intention to commit matrimony the coming winter, to sink gracefully into a nonentity. We all come to it sooner or later," and she laughed, with a touch of scorn.

If she had glanced up—well, then he would have been at her feet, tried his fate once more, and lost. Instead, he said, huskily:

"You love him, of course? I know you have had one chance to marry brilliantly—for money."

"I love him—of course."

A flock of sea birds went sailing above them. The tide was coming in fast.

"Had you not better return?" he asked, for the silence cut his soul like a knife. "The wind is growing chilly."

"Do not wait for me," and she gave an imperious wave of her hand.

"Farewell. I do not suppose I shall see you again. I hope you may realize your happiest dream," and he turned, angry at himself.

"Thank you."

That was all. The brilliant sunset had faded, and the sky was fast glooming over. She went home alone, in the gray light, like one in a dream. Now and then she wrung her hands unconsciously. She was fighting the old fight again, sore and wounded. If she could go back, if she could say the one word, Ah, how foolish to throw away the fine gold of one's life.

Miss Garnier went straight to her room, washed her face and brushed her hair. There was a little note left by her aunt. Mrs. Graham had driven over for Mrs. Keith. She would not be home until ten.

Georgie rang the bell, ordered some toast and tea, and took up a book, reading here and there snatches that interested her most; all the while debating another question in her mind.

If she had been downstairs, and seen Burton Rollins at the table between two women dressed in deep mourning, she could never have written the letter that she did presently. Pride would have taken her out of the hands of fate, just as surely as it did years before.

As it was, she wrote with a tender dispassionateness, clear-eyed, and large-hearted, regretting that she had been betrayed into promising, and sorrowing for his sake that she must inflict such a wound. She had tried to love with her whole heart, and failed; and less than that was not worthy of his acceptance. She was not willing to add another to the list of dissatisfied marriages. She would not blame him if after this exhibition of weakness he despised her and refused her even the friendship that had proved so satisfying; but, whichever way he rendered his verdict, she must always esteem him as one of the noblest men she had ever known, and whose acquaintance had afforded her rare pleasure. Even to be forgiven by such a man would be an honour.

Mrs. Keith returned with a little harmless gossip, and the two ladies retired for the night. They were late at breakfast the next morning, and remarked two new comers—a thin, elderly lady, very artificially gotten up, and a thin, pale, sharp young woman much resembling her. They both devoted themselves to the care of an unruly little girl, who appeared whimsical to the last degree.

It seemed to Miss Garnier that there was a familiar look about them. But then she had seen so many people at hotels and watering-places, and she was so intent just now upon her own affairs. Mrs. Keith learned before the day had ended that it was a Mrs. Cummings and her daughter and sister, Mrs. Burton Rollins. The child was Mr. Rollins's motherless little girl.

Mrs. Keith glanced askance at her niece, and gently sounded her. It was evident she knew nothing of these people, did not even mistrust. Would the fact of Mr. Rollins being free make any difference with Georgie's feelings? Mrs. Rollins had been dead two months, and they had heard no whisper of it—if they could go on until Georgie was safely married! How much did she care for this old lover?

Mrs. Keith need not have felt so alarmed. Miss Cummings had recognized Miss Garnier, and felt now that she was her rival, for she meant, if it was possible, to secure her brother-in-law, or at least keep him from marrying another. So they kept discreetly out of Miss Garnier's way, Miss Evelyn comforting herself with the fact that Burton Rollins had gone away for a while on business.

Georgie had a little note from Mr. McArthur, who had been unexpectedly called away to Edinburgh. Her letter would follow him then, and a longer time must elapse before she could receive an answer. Now that she had taken a decisive step, she wanted to reach the end without further delay.

Her letter was forward to Scotland. Sitting at his late dinner, Leonard McArthur espied an old friend at the lower end of the table. At dessert Burton Rollins came up and joined him, and afterwards accepted an invitation to his room.

"Why, you look as comfortable as if you meant to remain here for life," said Rollins, lighting a cigar. "You always wear such an easy, delightful air. I don't believe you ever had a trouble in your life. You have shown your good sense by shunning matrimony."

"I don't know," and McArthur laughed a little. "Even old birds are sometimes caught at last."

"You cannot mean—"

And Rollins's eyes questioned him eagerly.

"I may as well confess. Before Christmas I hope to be a married man."

"I am sorry, old chap—that is the truth."

"I hope to be very happy. You know I am not one of your crazily-romantic fellows. My—our engagement has been of the moderate kind. We esteem and admire each other, and friendship is the basis of our love. We have both passed the days of unreasonable passion, and I think her one of the noblest,

grandest and truest of women. I wish you to know her."

"Len, you are hardly at all in love. You are foolish to marry, if you can keep out of it. It is not the paradise you dream."

"Yet I suppose you had your day of hot, impulsive passion that swept all before it. It is in your temperament. Were you any the happier for it?"

And Leonard McArthur looked gravely in the face of his friend.

Rollins started.

"Yes," he said, slowly, "I did have such a day. It lasted eight months. There were some delicious hours that were worth a king's ransom. It was intense, glowing, satisfying life. Heavens! I should like to live it over again!"

"But you did not—"

"No. We quarrelled and made up; we were both hasty, wilful, and there was something in her soul that I always believe she never showed me fully. I don't know—it is all past and gone. There came a rupture. Both were proud. I took a common-sense view of the subject, and said if we cannot agree now how will it be when we are married? Better give her up. Miss Cummings liked me—well, loved me, perhaps, and her parents were eager that I should marry her. It was a plain, practical, unromantic match. I was a good, faithful husband; that is, I gave her everything she wanted, sometimes yielding against my better judgment, and when she was cross or sulky did not fly to other women's smiles. But it was a miserable farce on my part, though I think she would rather have had me than not. But I believe now that I would have been happier with the other if she had broken my heart in six months. And I say to you now, don't marry this woman unless you love her better than your own life, and she loves you in the same manner. You cannot delude yourself into bliss."

"Why, Burton, I never supposed—"

"No. Maybe I am foolish for telling it. While Blanche lived I should not have breathed it, though she knew the whole story and took me to spite of it. I have never seen the woman until about a week ago. She was cool and proud, and belongs to another. And there it ends, but no one can ever stir my heart as she has stirred it. I know what love can be."

A servant brought in some letters. McArthur glanced over the business notes and at last came to one in a woman's hand, long and closely written. Rollins fancied he would rather be alone.

"I think I will say good-night to you. When do you breakfast in the morning?"

"No, do not go, Rollins. Wait; I have something more to say. How strange that we should have had this confidence about love. I want some advice. Sit down again."

Leonard McArthur was a long while reading his letter. It did not take him so entirely by surprise. He had trusted to time to overcome Miss Garnier's troublesome scruples; he had thought them banished, when, lo! here they arose with more than their olden force. But for Rollins's passionate protest he would have combated them in his quiet, logical way, and perhaps convinced her again.

"Read this," he said, huskily. "It is what we were talking about. Is she right or wrong?"

Rollins took the letter with a spasm of conscientious delicacy. What business had he to pore over the secrets of an unknown woman's heart? But this writing—so familiar and yet so changed, so strong and reliant in the place of girlish carelessness. She—Georgina Garnier—writing love-letters to Leonard McArthur! Once they had been to him.

The words blurred before his eyes. Had he ever seen this grand and tender side of her character? Had she been so reasonable and just with him, so afraid of wounding, so gracious in her humility? Ah, if she had ever said this to him:

"The summer and the seaside have helped perhaps to bring back the old romance that I feel assured now will never die. Week by week the knowledge has grown upon me, and when I saw him to-day I felt that our engagement could no longer be continued in truth and honour or justice to you. The poles are more widely sundered than we are, and ever must be, for fate has interposed, and rendered even the commonest friendship impossible. During nine years we have not met; and my hope is that we shall never meet again, but to-day I know in my inmost soul that I would rather be miserable as his wife, if fate had so willed, than the happy wife of any other man. Feeling this way I have no right to marry you. I dare not so sin against my own soul and yours. Let me keep my memory and live my own life, your friend if you will; if not, bravely going my way alone, proud to have been once admired by so noble a man."

Burton Rollins laid down the letter and folded his arms across his broad chest. Should he go quietly out of these two lives, leaving them to some time reunite the broken and tangled threads, or speak for

himself? Would she be too proud to confess to him, sweet hypocrite that she was—that women always were in their sensitive self-love?

"She is too noble to give up without a struggle," McArthur said. "And yet—if she never could love me—if I failed to make her happy? Speak, Rollins, from your wider experience."

"Leonard, dear old friend, I will speak the truth, first. I loved this woman. I saw her that unfortunate day, but she could not have been prouder or more self-controlled if she were already a wife. Judge if she love me still. I do not think she knew or guessed that—"

"You were free," added McArthur, in a hard, strained tone, shading his eyes.

"Our paths have diverged so far, our separation was so entire. And to-day I believe she would die sooner than own this to me. Who can fathom a woman's heart?"

They sat in silence a long while, then McArthur came slowly round and took his friend's hand.

"I give her to you, Burton," he said, his voice full of tender pain. "I think she belongs to you. Oh, make her happy; it was my dream. If you suppose I did not love her truly and well, you are much mistaken. Heaven knows this is the hardest wrench of my life."

Burton Rollins pressed the hand, moved even to tears.

"No," he said. "The field is yours to try again. Custom and propriety forbid my speaking."

"Do you leave her?"

"Heaven knows," and Rollins bowed his head.

"When you are ready come and claim her. But do not shut me out of your friendship; I ask that."

They said good night. Yet there was little sleep for either of them; for one dared not hope, and the other was too brave to despair.

They parted the next day. McArthur finished his business, and returned to Mrs. Keith to find that she and her niece were settling themselves where they were for the autumn.

The first interview between Miss Garnier and her lover had in it much of pain, and yet it brought a truer and clearer state of each other's feelings. She hid nothing from him now. It was as Rollins supposed; she was not aware of Mrs. Rollins's death.

"If she can be that true to a memory, she deserves him," McArthur thought; so they fell back to their olden status of friendship.

Mrs. Keith was much annoyed to hear that the marriage had been given up.

"I don't know what you are waiting for, Georgie," she said, pettishly. "There are dozens of women who would be only too glad to take Mr. McArthur."

"As I should be if I loved him. But he is too noble a man to be married from any motive except the highest love," was Miss Garnier's reply.

One evening, when they were alone, McArthur spoke of Rollins. He was in London examining the relative claims of several business offers, expecting to make a change shortly.

"I want you to see him," McArthur said. "He is a very dear friend of mine. I have spoken of you to him."

"Burton Rollins!" she exclaimed, slowly. "I believe I knew him years ago, when papa was alive;" and she tried to look unconcerned.

"His wife died last summer, and I think he is quite tired of his native town."

"His wife! Mrs. Rollins! Though it is not strange that the news did not reach us—we have no communication. When was it?"

"Early in July."

"Oh! I once heard a lady who knew them well say that Mrs. Rollins had made him promise to marry his sister, in the event of her death."

"I think not, and I am quite sure that he does not desire to."

Miss Garnier bit her lips and blushed crimson.

"Do not bring him here," she said, sharply.

"I shall bring him," was the reply, in a grave tone; "I know his secret—yours too."

"Oh!" she murmured, brokenly, "you are so good, so generous!"

"You will tell him the whole truth!"

"Yes."

Burton Rollins came alone. Miss Garnier kept her word. Indeed, it would have been difficult to conceal anything now. Why should she be ashamed or afraid of the truth when it was so sweet for him to hear? So they came to their true estate at last.

Mrs. Cummings was much offended when a second marriage was broached, and Miss Evelyn spiteful to the last degree. Still they did not refuse the cottage and the small income he proffered them. Mrs. Cummings insisted that she could not and would not yield her dear Blanche's child to the jealousy of a stepmother, and Mr. Rollins acquiesced in their claim. But Miss Blanche, oddly and perversely enough, adores her new mamma. E. M. D.



[FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH.]

GERMAINE WILDE.

"It is positively shameful!" ejaculated Lyle Curtis.

"What?" asked Miss Germaine Wilde, looking up from her embroidery.

"As if you did not know, Germaine!"

"I know? How should I?"

"Surely, how should you? What have we been talking about for the last half-hour?"

"Of the weather, the latest style of visiting-cards, Miss Payson's charity-school, and Kate Kershaw."

"Kate Kershaw. There you have it! She is beautiful and fascinating, and flirts with charming science; and I say it's a shame."

"A shame that she flirts? Cousin Lyle, one would think you had been wounded."

"Not I. I am all right. But I have known Henry Ridgeway from boyhood, and he is the most glorious old fellow in the world—worthy of a queen. And it makes me growl to think he should waste himself on Kate Kershaw."

Miss Wilde arched her handsome eyebrows.

"Do you think her unworthy?"

"I do. She has no soul. And Henry is all soul."

"Ah! fortunate fellow! How much he must save in tailor's bills."

"Fahaw! Germaine, you are in a sarcastic mood, and I do not like you then. What is the matter? Was Lawrence inattentive last night?"

"Lawrence? Really, I do not remember."

"Do not remember! And yet engaged to marry George Lawrence! Only hear the woman! Wouldn't George feel flattered?"

"I daresay. You might ask him if you feel any curiosity on the subject."

"Germaine, seriously, I am afraid you do not love

this man you are promised to! Tell me, cousin. I could not bear to see my little Germaine unhappy."

She flushed slightly, and put away the hand Lyle Curtis extended to clasp hers. She was not a woman to accept sympathy tamely.

"Lyle, let us not talk upon this matter. I presume I shall marry Mr. Lawrence. I like him as well as I do any of the others. I have lived twenty-seven years in the world, and I regard love as a myth."

Lyle held up his hands in much horror.

"Twenty-seven, and unmarried! Good gracious, Germaine! I don't wonder you are desperate. Let me see the gray hairs. I'll keep the secret for you."

She laughed.

"My dear Lyle, they will come in time, like all other disagreeable things. And now let us talk of Henry Ridgeway. Is there a romance to tell?"

"Hardly. It is a very simple story. They met in the country. Two young people thrown constantly together in a great lonesome house, summer afternoons in the woods, moonlight walks, rides at sunset, and then the inevitable consequence. She softened her pride, and lent a willing ear to words he was only too ready to speak. And he believes her noble and generous and loyal."

"Perhaps she is."

"I tell you she is not. I know her thoroughly. She is a gay, heartless woman of the world. He is heir to a hundred thousand, and her income is barely sufficient to keep her in pearls and point lace. Don't you see?"

"Yes, I see. How hot the sun is! Hand me that fan, Lyle, please."

Lyle Curtis looked at his cousin through his half-closed eyes. She was an enigma to him; she had always been. He saw a dark face flushed in the lips and cheeks to crimson, lighted by great luminous brown eyes, and framed in wavy bands of black hair. The whole face was full of passion; he almost

trembled with thinking how that woman might love; and yet, by her own confession, she had never felt a single throb of sweet emotion.

A sudden idea swept over him. It was so new that it showed itself in his face.

"Well, Lyle, what is it?" she asked, smiling at his earnestness.

"Oh, Germaine! if it could only be! But confound it! there are always obstacles in the way."

"In the way of what?"

"I was thinking of you and Henry Ridgeway—and together."

"Lyle"—she rose haughtily—"I forgive you because you are my cousin; and, were it not too much trouble, I would teach this Henry Ridgeway a lesson."

"And you would teach yourself at the same time," returned Lyle, warmly. "I'll wager a coronet."

"We shall see," she said, and left him to himself.

The next morning Henry Ridgeway came to Cedar Bluff, came as the escort of Miss Kershaw.

Old Mark Hartley, the widowed proprietor of the finest place for miles round, sought to supply his lack of kindred by surrounding himself with the children of his friends; and every year in summer time the old halls rang with merry voices and festive songs.

Germaine met Ridgeway on the back piazza. She was tying up a stray branch of a rose-bush, and the thorns caught her sleeve.

Ridgeway was smoking just behind her on the steps, and she did not perceive him until he spoke in a quiet, authoritative way.

"You are a captive. Permit me to release you."

He cut off the offending branch with his knife, and detached it from her sleeve. Then their eyes met. She looked up at him, he down at her. Her forehead reached just to his lips. He thought of it even then.

What a revelation a single glance will sometimes make! In that very first moment one soul spoke to the other, and the language was understood. Ridgeway grew pale as death, and Germaine flushed to the roots of her hair.

She turned from him rudely, and swept into the hall. From there she went up to her chamber. She was supremely angry with him and with herself. He had exercised over her a power she had never felt before—this man, who was to her an utter stranger, and whose heart was in the keeping of another woman!

She made a wicked resolve. The idle words she had spoken to Lyle Curtis about the lesson she would teach Ridgeway, should not be idle words. She looked in the glass. Her face might help her to any conquest. She shut her small hands slowly; the action spoke volumes.

At dinner Mr. Ridgeway was formally presented. Germaine acknowledged the introduction with her usual haughty grace.

Ridgeway sat beside Kate Kershaw; Kate, golden of hair, with eyes amber brown, and a complexion like cream flushed with meadow strawberry. Her voice was soft and sweet as the ocean wind, and her smile a glory that made her false, fair face like the faces we think the angels wear.

Ridgeway, cool and calm, talked to Miss Kershaw, and occasionally looked at Germaine. I think he understood at once how it was to be between them.

A week of fine weather and pleasure-seeking followed. There were fishing and bathing, and botanical excursions, and delightful mornings in the cool parlours, and mellow sunset rambles by the lake-side, before the grass grew too wet with summer dew.

Germaine and Ridgeway were polite to each other, coldly so, and Kate Kershaw, with the keen instinct of a practised flirt, understood them better than they understood themselves. But she could afford to be quiet, for there was "better game in the moors," if it could be snared.

One day the party went to Forest Bluff, a great rock rising gradually from the plain, covered mostly with scrubby trees, and hanging far out over the sea.

Germaine strayed away from the others, and went out on the extreme verge of the rock. The dizzy height fascinated her. She thought she would like to stoop over and look down. She did so; but the insecure footing deceived her, and in another second she would have been dashed upon the rocks below, if Henry Ridgeway had not caught her back.

One moment he held her tightly to his breast, his heart beating so that it almost stopped his breath, and then she tore herself from him with rude haste. Her eyes blazed, her whole face flashed the scorn and anger she felt.

"I could almost wish I had let you perish," he muttered, between his closed teeth.

In his hoarse voice she had a triumph. She had

the power to move him, even as he could move her. She felt a sort of fierce delight in the thought, and she the betrothed of a man who trusted her. She scorned herself the next moment, wondering to what base depths she was sinking.

From Lawrence she shrank with a sort of nervous dread. The touch of his hand angered her. She vaguely wished she had been in her grave that winter's night, six months before, when, in the soft flush of chandeliers, the subdued atmosphere of orange flowers and hot-house plants, she had promised to be his wife.

A little later she met Lyle Curtis alone. Somehow she could not bear to look her cousin in the eyes now, so she turned her head away towards the sunset.

He took her chin and lifted the face into the light.

"Germaine," he said, gravely, "you are playing a dangerous game, and I am not afraid to wager whatever you please that you will lose."

Her cheeks grew hot.

"Lyle, you are impertinent."

"I ask your pardon; but, in teaching Henry Ridgeway a lesson, be careful you do not learn it before him."

The girl's anger was something terrible.

Lyle felt himself withering under it. He tried to apologize.

"My dearest cousin," he said, "my little Germaine—"

But she struck down the arm he would have put around her and flew up to her chamber.

Once there, she fought the battle all over again, and came forth victor for the time. And during the next fortnight no smile came readier than hers, no laugh was more frequent. But at the end of the fortnight a change was coming. It brought the first of September, and on the fourth day of that month Germaine and Lawrence were to be wedded. It had all been arranged previously, and the party at Cedar Bluff was to be a wedding party at the last.

The night before the wedding Germaine refused to come down to the drawing-room. Something made her wish to be alone. But after a while the silence and the terrible chance for thought made her half frantic. She threw on a shawl and stole out on the lower piazza. Glancing in at the window, she saw Miss Kershaw, cool, calm, and smiling, sitting on the sofa beside Henry Ridgeway. Lawrence, gloomy and abstracted, leaned against the mantelshelf.

Germaine seated herself on the trunk of a tree and gathered up a handful of the dead leaves at her feet.

A footstep stirred the dry grass. She rose; but a strong hand forced her back, and she heard close beside her the heavy breathing of Henry Ridgeway, and felt his eyes burning down into her own.

"Germaine," he said, hoarsely, "you are to be married to-morrow?"

She did not speak. Something choked her. He repeated the question.

"You are to be married to-morrow?"

She bowed.

"And you do not love, George Lawrence—because your whole soul belongs to another?"

She sprang to her feet, her cheeks flushed, her eyes blazing. In that moment of bitter shame she could almost have killed Henry Ridgeway, because of the humiliation he had put upon her.

He wrapped his arms around her, and held her to his breast so closely she could not struggle.

"My darling! my darling! forgive me! I love you so! I am half mad! Where is the use of fighting against it any longer? You are mine, and I am yours; and nothing save death shall divide us."

In that moment what did he care if Kate Kershaw wore the willow, and George Lawrence stood at the altar bridesless?

And suddenly a rustle amid the leaves smote the silence; and, looking up, Germaine and Henry stood face to face with Kate and George Lawrence.

Lawrence was the first to recover his self-possession.

He extended his hand to Ridgeway.

"A fair exchange is no robbery, is it?" he asked meaningly.

Germaine and Ridgeway comprehended matters in a flash, and both hearts thanked Heaven devoutly. Kate spoke in her cool, silvery tone:

"Mr. Lawrence is better suited to my taste, Mr. Ridgeway; and I do not think, from appearances, that Miss Wilde will break her heart."

The next day there was a double wedding at Cedar Bluff, and four people were made happy. Henry and Germaine married for love, Kate for wealth, and Lawrence for beauty. C. A.

DEATH OF AN OBESSE PRODIGY.—Miss D. Heenan, sister of the well-known American boxer, died some days ago in Berlin, literally of suffocation. She was,

says a correspondent, undoubtedly one of the most corpulent women in the world, and had been for some time exhibiting her not uncomely features and her all too solid mass of flesh to an admiring Berlin public, together with a selection from the silver cups and other presents received by her from enthusiastic citizens and crowned heads during the course of her travels, when almost without any previous warning the poor lady's career was cut short.

SCIENCE.

It may be convenient to know that a bronze halfpenny is exactly an inch broad, and therefore gives us a very convenient measure. Laid on an Ordnance map of the inch scale the halfpenny covers just 500 acres. Now, also, the third of an ounce is the postal unit, and it is well to remember that a penny is precisely that weight.

TO TEST WATER.—If half a pint of water be placed in a perfectly clean, colourless, glass-stoppered bottle, a few grains of the best white-lump sugar added, and the bottle freely exposed to the daylight in the window of a warm room, the liquid should not become turbid, even after exposure for a week or ten days. If the water becomes turbid it is open to the grave suspicion of sewage contamination, but if it remain clear it is almost certainly safe. We owe to Heisch this simple, valuable, but hitherto strangely neglected test.

RHEUMATIC GOUT.—A Frenchman with rheumatic gout found this singular remedy a cure for his ailment: He insulated his bedstead from the floor by placing underneath each post a broken-off bottom of a glass bottle. He says the effect was magical, that he had not been free from rheumatic gout for fifteen years, and that he began to improve immediately after the application of the insulators. We are reminded by this statement of a patent obtained for a physician some twelve or more years ago, which created considerable interest at the time. The patent consisted in placing glass cups under the bedposts in a similar manner to the above, and the patentee claimed to have effected some remarkable cures by the use of his glass insulators.

GEOGRAPHICAL CONGRESS AND EXHIBITION.—The Paris Geographical Society has decided that an international congress for the geographic sciences shall be convoked in that city in the spring of next year, and that there shall be held in connection with it an exhibition of apparatus, maps, charts, instruments, and all other things connected therewith. The object of the meeting is described as the same as of that held in Antwerp in 1871, namely, the discussion of all the great problems which arise out of the study of the earth. The French Government gives its support to the enterprise, and the Society hopes to enlist the aid of all foreign Governments. The date of opening, the details of organization, and the programme of the Congress will be published shortly.

LACQUER.—White lacquer is made by mixing silver leaf, carefully divided, with the ordinary varnish; red lacquer by the mixture of mineral cinnabar or carthamus flowers; yellow lacquer with the addition of orpiment only; green is produced by a mixture of orpiment and indigo; and violet lacquer by the addition to the varnish of a certain mineral of that colour, reduced to an impalpable powder. The older the articles varnished with the above the more brilliant and beautiful are the colours. Another compound lacquer of which the materials are not given, is used by the painters for the richest Chinese ornamental work which is decorated with gold. The perfection of Chinese and Japanese lacquer work does not, however, depend solely on the excellence of the varnish, or the careful preparation of the various colours, for the application of the lacquer demands the most elaborate pains. In the first place, the surface of the wood to be lacquered is prepared with the greatest care; when necessary, the joints are filled in with fine tow and then covered with thin strips of silk or paper. The surface is then dressed with an oil obtained from a certain tree which grows on the mountains and highlands of China; when the oil is perfectly dry, the varnish is applied. With two or three coats of the varnish, its transparency is so great that all the veins and marks of the wood are perfectly distinct; to disguise the wood entirely many more coats have to be laid on, and finally the surface is made as smooth and brilliant as glass.

ANTIQUARIAN DISCOVERY.—While digging for gravel on the Irrigation Farm at Beddington, some workmen discovered the remains of a Roman warrior, who had evidently been buried in his armour, together with some arms. Some time ago the remains of a Roman villa were found in the same neighbourhood, and a quantity of coins, Roman and British, between Croydon and Norwood. Mr. Wright stated that the remains were found at a depth of 18 inches from the surface, thus leading to the belief that the interment had been a hasty one. He had

no doubt that some battle had been fought near the spot. At the suggestion of Dr. Cresswell it was decided that a communication should be made to the Surrey Archaeological Society on the subject. It may be mentioned that the locality in which this interesting discovery has been made is rich in archaeological remains. Distinct traces have been found of "hut circles" in the fields south-east of Woodcote and near Wallington Manor House, and it is supposed that the Roman town of Noviamagus occupied the southern portion of the parish. The Roman villa alluded to was discovered on the farm occupied by the Croydon Local Board of Health in 1871, between Beddington Lane and Hackbridge station. The site of the villa would be very nearly in the direct line from Woodcote to Streatham. The evidence from the coins would give a Roman occupation of the locality from A.D. 258 to A.D. 375. According to ancient evidence a number of Roman roads converged in this neighbourhood, proving it to be an important position during the time of the Roman occupation of Britain. This idea gains confirmation from the numerous relics brought to light from time to time. In Salmon's "History of Surrey" mention is made of "barrows, or small mounds, on the rising ground above Barrow hedges, called in that day 'Gally-hills,' or devil's mounds. About Woodcote were considerable traces of buildings. Axes and spear-heads had been continually found in the fields and many old wells." Some of these latter remain to the present day, and at frequent intervals broken weapons and armour have been found.

THE MOON AND THE WEATHER.

WIERZBICKI, of the Observatory at Cracow, has made use of forty-five years of continuous observations on the climate of that station to investigate the influence of the moon. The first person who made any practical investigation of this subject appears to have been Laplace, who studied the influence of the moon upon the height of the barometer. In the same direction also Bouvard laboured, basing his investigation on twelve years of observations at Paris, and he proved that the influence of the moon upon our atmosphere was so inconsiderable, at least for the latitude of Paris, that it might be considered as not existing at all. Wierzbicki divides his investigation into two sections; studying first the influence of the synodic revolution of the moon, or the time that the moon occupies in passing through all its phases, and further subdividing the period of forty-five years into two periods of nineteen years each, and showing that for both of these periods, as well as for the entire period of forty-five years, the clear weather (i.e. the number of clear days) shows scarcely any trace of a connection with the phase of the moon. During the lunar month, in fact, the number of clear days increases and diminishes five times, and without any apparent regularity.

With regard to the rainfall, in the first period of nineteen years the maximum occurs between the first quarter and the full moon and the least rainfall between the full moon and the last quarter. On the other hand, the last period of nineteen years leads to a different result; so that, from the whole series of observations, there results only a very slight indication of a connection with the moon—which connection, if it actually exists, would require for its demonstration a series of measurements of the rainfall numbering through a much longer period of years. The result attained by the study of the number of days on which rain fell substantially agrees with that from the study of the quantity of rain fallen, in showing that the moon has very little, if any, influence upon processes in our atmosphere. The same author, in studying the anomalous revolution of the moon, gives, by a very careful process of reasoning, two conclusions different from those advocated by Schiaparelli, in finding no trace of the influence of the distance of the moon from the earth upon meteorological phenomena.

A NEW CABLE SHIP.

A new cable ship, the "Faraday," was recently launched by Messrs. C. Mitchell and Co. The launch was of the most successful character, everything passing off without a hitch. The vessel has been built to the order of Messrs. Siemens Brothers, London, for the purpose of laying their Atlantic cables. She is 360ft. long, 52ft. beam, and 36ft. deep. Her gross register tonnage is about 5,000, and her dead carrying weight about 6,000 tons. The iron hull, built under the inspection of Lloyd's agents, will be accorded the highest certificate of classification. From her peculiar structure, the vessel receives enormous strength, in addition to the usual requirements of Lloyd's rules. Supporting the sides of the vessel are three enormous cable tanks, constructed of plate iron, and forming a series of double arches. These are united together, and attached to the general fabric of the vessel by five iron decks.

For the comfort and convenience of those on board, the upper and main decks are supplemented by the usual decks of wood.

The ship is double-bottomed, and below the bottoms is a network of iron girders for carrying the cable tanks, and these give also a longitudinal strength to that portion of the hull. Water ballast is also carried in this space, by which the ship may be trimmed as the paying out of the cable is carried on. This arrangement has likewise the advantage of dispensing with cargo or other dead weight beyond fuel. For the purpose of filling and emptying any single compartment of the double bottom, or for flooding any one of the cable tanks, a complete and well devised system of valves, cocks, pipes, and auxiliary engine power has been introduced, and the "system," which is worked from the engine-room, is under the control of the engineers. The bow and stern of the vessel is of the same form, and in this respect she is unlike other vessels in outward appearance. Rudders are provided at each end, and she can thus be navigated ahead or astern, as may be desired, when "paying out" or picking up a cable. Each rudder, to provide against accident, is supplied with strong screw steering gear, worked in the usual manner by manual power, and the steering is accomplished by means of a steam engine placed amidships. Harfield's steam windlass works the anchors and cable chains, and steam apparatus, placed in various positions along the deck, performs all the heavy labour about the vessel.

The accommodation provided is of the most complete nature, for the large staff of officers, electricians, and crew number about 150 persons. In addition to the multifarious appliances of a cable ship, the vessel will be fitted up with all the cabins and appliances of a large passenger steamer, and will be propelled by machinery of the compound surface condensing principle. To obtain increased steering or manoeuvring power—an important condition in cable laying—the steamer will be provided with two propellers, commonly termed "twin screws," which will be worked by two separate sets of engines placed vertically over the shaft with two cylinders, one at high and the other at low pressure. By this means great regularity of motion will be obtained, and by a high degree of "expansion" in working the "system," fuel will be greatly economised to an extent that would have been considered impracticable a few years ago.

ELECTRO SYMPATHETIC CLOCKS.

AMONG the objects of interest in the Art Exhibition of Dundee, few excited more interest among the visitors than a clock worked by electricity in connection with a normal or master-clock. Messrs. Ritchie and Sons of Edinburgh, whose name is familiar in connection with the time-gun signal, introduced the system some time since, and this system the present clocks are intended to illustrate. The master clock, which is one merely of an ordinary kind, requiring to be wound up periodically, is placed on the platform of the large hall. The oscillations of its pendulum are used to complete contact between the poles of a galvanic battery placed on the top of the clock case.

There are two cells of Daniell's battery, one pole of each being placed in metallic connection with the gaspipe, and the other pole terminating in a slender spring against which the pendulum rod impinges; and while contact is thus obtained alternately with one or other spring a current of positive or negative electricity is sent through the pendulum rod, along the insulated wire connected with it to the other end of the hall, where the sympathetic clock is placed. This differs from previous electric clocks, and is provided with a magnetic pendulum, consisting of a wooden rod having a hollow coil or bobbin of insulated copper wire, the ends of which are attached to the suspension springs on which the pendulum is hung. A double bundle of permanent magnets is fixed in the centre of this bobbin, their similar poles being placed towards each other. An attraction to and repulsion from the poles of the magnet hung in the centre of the coil is caused by the passage of the currents of electricity through the wire coil of the pendulum, in which motion is thus produced and maintained. The makers have constructed a simple but effective escapement, or rather propellant, by which two arms are alternately raised by the pendulum out of action with the record wheel of the clock-work, and when released, by mere force of gravity, push forward the wheel-work and hands by sudden and decided steps, which are thus registered by the hands of the clock. There is such a peculiarity in the construction of the pallets, that no probable force can push forward the hands beyond the fixed stops, and no power less than the weight of the gravity arm will drive the wheelwork backwards.

The difference between this system and that which works electric clocks hitherto in use, is that the passing currents of electricity are employed merely

to maintain motion in the pendulum, which is effected by a very weak battery, and from the great momentum these currents may be intermitted or the wire cut for even two minutes at a time without destroying the coincidence of time shown by the sympathetic clock, which is dependent on the motion of its own pendulum, and not in any way upon the power of the battery. This allows the opportunity of causing several clocks attached to the same wire circuit to report their accuracy by making each clock at a certain second to cut the wire connection during that second, and thus the flow of the current is prevented. By means of a galvanometer placed in the wire these dropped seconds are observed and the correctness of the respective clocks guaranteed. Whatever the number of clocks placed on the same wire circuit, all of them will of course act in unison with the beat of the normal or master clock.

FACETIÆ.

PUTTING IT SHORTER.—A correspondent writes to suggest a shorter title for the widely-advertised "Gladstone Bag."—"The Sack!"—*Punch*.

"You say you love her, old fellow?" "Yes, to distraction." "Well, then, there's only one thing to be done—marry her." "Ah, that's out of the question; I feel that I love her too ardently for it to last long!"

THE guillotine was the first attempt at shaving by machinery. It took off the beard very cleanly. But there was a slight objection to this invention—it took off the beard and head together.

THE POLICE AND THE PUBLIC.

Magistrate: "You say, prisoner you've a complaint against the constable. What is it?"

Prisoner: "Please, sir, he took me unawares, sir!"—*Punch*.

POLITICAL HEROISM.—We are glad to be assured, by fully competent authorities, that most of the ex-M.P.'s who lost their seats at the election, have borne their disappointment in an ex-M.P.-lary manner.—*Punch*.

ODD.—In an advertisement for places as milliners, the advertisers express themselves as ready "to cut out and take orders." This sounds like an offer for duties something between an errand boy and a curate, and means neither.—*Punch*.

HAYMAN VERSUS GLASSER.—The counsel for the plaintiff in this case stated that his client's treatment had been unfair beyond precedent. "Surely this is a mistake. Have you not heard before of a Hay(y)man, who wishing to suspend another, was himself suspended instead."—*Punch*.

"OTIUM CUM."

74 A: "Nice spring morning, Mr. James! Takin' it easy."

Mr. James ("Liberal Party"): "Morning, Mr. Robert!"—*(Languidly.)*—Ah, if you'd 'a' had five years o' horrice, you'd be glad to unbend a bit, my boy, I can tell you!"—*Punch*.

A RECOMMENDATION.—The following is the recommendation lately given by a lady to her departed servant:—"The bearer has been in my house a year—minus eleven months. During this time she has shown herself diligent—at the house door; frugal—in work; mindful—of herself; prompt—in excuses; friendly—towards men; faithful—to her lovers; and honest—when everything had vanished."

A REASON—WITH A DIFFERENCE.—Among the other "Claimants" determined on trying their chances of a grab at the surplus, are the railway directors, who are organising a movement to free them from the duty on passengers. There is one ground for the demand we have not yet seen stated, that the directors have already freed themselves from most of their duties to passengers.—*Punch*.

A PARISIAN who was known as a freethinker met a Parisian friend the other day, and, taking him by the hand, said, "I have become a Christian." "I am glad to hear it," he replied; "suppose we now have a settlement of that little account between us. Pay me what thou owest." "No," said the new-born child, turning on his heel; "religion is religion, and business is business."

A YOUNGSTER, who had just risen to the dignity of the first pair of boots with soles to them, laid himself liable through some misdemeanour to maternal chastisement. After pleading to get clear to no effect, he exclaimed: "Well, if I've got to stand it, I mean to take off my boots." "Why?" asked his mother. "Because I won't be whipped in them new boots, at any rate."

SHERIDAN'S IMMORAL ADVICE TO HIS SON.

We never hear our friends boasting of having been under Niagara Falls without thinking of this advice.

"Tom, why did you go down that nasty coal-pit?" "Just that I might have it to say that I had done so, father," replied Tom.

"You blockhead! Could not you say that you had done so without taking the trouble," retorted his father.

How many adventures do men go through, merely for Sheridan's reason, "that they may have it to say." **BAD NEWS FOR TRAVELLERS.**—A contemporary estimates that "a quarter of the Legislature" is composed of railway directors. Rather a bad look-out this, we apprehend, for those who hope for accident-preventing legislation. If any railway reform bill is introduced in Parliament, we may feel certain that a quarter of the House, at any rate, will give no quarter to the bill.—*Punch*.

CONSOLATION.

"How do you find yourself to-day, Brother Simpkins?"

"No better, thank you."

"Are you ready to die, brother?"

"Yes, I think I am."

"Well, I'm glad of that, Brother Simpkins, for all the neighbours are willing too."

THAT SIGN.—"If you don't see what you want, ask for it?" is posted up in a conspicuous place in a West-end grocery. A man stepped into the establishment last week. He saw the card, and remarked, "I want a ten-pound note, and I don't see it." "Neither do I," was the laconic reply. The man looked farther, but as he left he advised the grocer to "take down that sign."

BITTER.

Discontented Caddy (to ladies, who, wishing to get rid of their small change, have tendered him one fourpenny piece, two threepenny ditto, one penny, one half-penny, and two farthings—the sum total amounting to his proper fare): "Well! 'ow long might yer both a' been a savin' up for this little treat?"—*Punch*.

Two lawyers in a county court—one of whom had gray hair, and the other, though just as old a man as his learned friend, had hair which looked suspiciously black—had some altercation about a question of practice in which the gentleman with the dark hair remarked to his opponent: "A person at your time of life, sir," looking at the barrister's gray head, "ought to have long enough experience to know what is customary in such cases." "Yes, sir," was the reply, "you may stare at my gray hair if you like. My hair will be gray as long as I live, and yours will be black as long as you dye."

ABOUT the best story told lately is of a wealthy German and a livery-stable keeper, who was loth to let his best gig to a stranger. The German was bound to have his ride, and agreed to buy the horse and trap, and when he returned the stable-keeper might refund the money. This was done, and the horse and trap returned and money refunded, when the German started to go. "Hold on," said the man of horses, "you have not paid your horse hire." "Why, my dear sir," said the German, coolly, "I have been driving my own horse this morning."

A CHOICE OF EVILS.

Fascinating Widow: "Now, that we are alone, Mr. Silvertongue, and likely to remain undisturbed for another half-hour or so, I have a very great favour to ask of you?"

Amateur Vocalist: "Pray—pray do?"

Fascinating Widow: "Will you, will you sit down to the piano, and sing me Beethoven's 'Adelaide' right through, from beginning to end, first in German, then in Italian, and then in English? Will you, Mr. Silvertongue?"

[Much flattered, the gifted warbler complies, and little dreams that the fair one's sole object in getting him to sing is to escape from the tedium of his conversation.]—*Punch*.

COULDN'T COME IT.

An Irishman was once brought before the Criminal Court, charged with having in his possession counterfeit notes, knowing them to be such.

"Prisoner, do you know your rights?" questioned the judge.

"Not so well as I do my wrongs," said Pat; "for to spake the truth we haven't been such intimate acquaintances of late."

"Well, you have the right to challenge the twelve men who will be called upon to try you," said the judge.

"Pon me sowl, thin, I'm not goin' to exercise it. That's a nice job you'd be ather givin' me this mornin', to challenge 'em and fight 'em too—one down and another come on, I suppose. Oh! no, you can't come it no how, judge."

The jury finally acquitted him—more for his drolery, probably, than for the clearness of the defence.

JURY INSURANCE.—It appears that, for the disastrous service imposed on the special jury in the monster Orton trial, who, consisting of commercial men, were forced ruinously to neglect their business, the Lords of the Treasury have decided on allowing those unfortunate gentlemen a compensation, to use a word ironically, of not more than three hundred guineas each. We congratulate Sir Stafford Northcote on following the Lowe example set by his pre-

deceator of cheeseparing memory. It is all very well for the jury, at news of such inadequate payment for their unparalleled expenditure of time and pains, to exclaim, through their foreman—"What the Dickens!" All persons liable to serve on juries are liable to be sacrificed in respect of their incomes, if mercantile or professional, for their country's good. Of course the poor public cannot afford the infinitesimal contribution requisite to pay individuals for their loss of time. Individuals must make up their minds for ruin, as for death, when the lot falls on them to suffer for the community at large, without looking for amends which would cost its members severally a fraction of a fraction of a farthing. He that objects to thus becoming a victim to society would likewise be as selfish and unpatriotic as to complain of being selected to be eaten by his countrymen in a community of cannibals. Nevertheless, it would be a convenience if there were instituted a Jury Insurance Company, in which people in danger of being summoned to serve on juries might insure their means of living against that calamity.—*Punch*.

RULES FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT.

Always sit next to the carver, if you can, at dinner.
Ask no woman her age.
Be civil to all rich uncles and aunts.
Never joke with a policeman.
Take no notes or gold with you to a fancy bazaar—nothing but silver or copper.
Your oldest hat, of course, for an evening party.
Don't play a game of chess with a widow.
Pull down the blind before you put on your wig.
Make friends with the steward on board a steamer—there's no knowing how soon you may be placed in his power.

In every strange house it is as well to inquire where the brandy is kept—only think, if you were taken ill in the middle of the night.

A FRANK CONFESSION.

A farmer living in Oxford, went down to town, not a thousand miles from Portsmouth, for the purpose of purchasing some oxen, as he had been informed that there was a lot of very fine stock for sale by one of the wealthy land-owners of the place. Arriving, our friend met a man driving a team, of whom he inquired:

"Can you inform me where Mr. Wall lives?"
"There's a number of Wall's live around here, which one did you wish to find?" returned the stranger, who was a stoutly built, keen-eyed man, habited in home-spun, but bearing in his general appearance unmistakable tokens of ease and comfort, so far as finances were concerned.

"I don't know what his Christian name is," pursued our friend; "but he is the owner of some very fine oxen."

"Well," responded the stranger, "they all own pretty fair oxen."

"But the one I wish to find has oxen for sale."

"As for that, sir, they'd any of 'em sell if they could get their price."

"But," exclaimed the Oxford man, "the Mr. Wall I wish to find is quite wealthy."

"Yes; well, I reckon there ain't any of 'em very bad off," replied the other with a nod.

"My Mr. Wall," continued our friend, hesitatingly, "has been represented to me as being a very close-fisted man, and not scrupulously honest in all his transactions."

With a curious twinkle of the eye, he said: "To tell you the truth, sir, I guess they're a close-fisted set all round, and I never heard that honesty run in the family. Isn't there something else?"

"Yes," replied the searcher for oxen, desperately, "they say he has been caught in the act of robbing his own brother's chicken-coop!"

The stranger bowed and smiled.

"I'm the man! Come with me, and I'll show you as fine a stock of cattle as you can find in the county; and if you know what oxen are, there's no danger of your being cheated."

AT THE MASQUERADE.

Nicholas the First was very fond of masquerade balls, and one night appeared at one in the character of the devil, with grinning face, horns and tail, and appeared to enjoy his character very much. About three o'clock in the morning he went out, and throwing over him some furs, called a coachman, and ordered him to take him to the Quay Anglais. As it was very cold he fell asleep, and when he awoke he found that the man had taken him in a wrong direction, for the Quay Anglais is one of the most elegant portions of St. Petersburg, while before him were only some miserable houses. Nicholas began to remonstrate, but the coachman paid no heed to him, and presently, passing through a stone gateway, brought him into the cemetery, and taking a large knife from his girdle, and pointing it at his employer's throat, said:

"Give me your money and your furs, or I will kill you!"

"And do you give me your soul," exclaimed Nicholas, as he drew off the furs and disclosed his personification of the devil.

The Russians are very superstitious, and the coachman was so terrified that he fell senseless on the ground, and the Emperor drove himself back to his palace.

ENCOURAGING.

A conceited actor, who was by no means a favourite with the public, was sitting one evening in a café, when a waiter informed him that there was a gentleman outside who wished to see him. Forthwith the actor stepped into the street, only to find himself in the presence of a noted wag and inveterate practical joker, with whom he was, by the way, familiarly acquainted.

"Well?" said the actor, inquiringly.

"Well?" echoed the other, coolly.

"Did you call me?" asked the comedian, somewhat puzzled.

"I did," was the response.

"What may have been your motive?" the other went on to say,

"To encourage you," answered the practical joker; "for at the theatre I don't remember that you were ever called out."

SWEET REPENTANCE!

Mr little pet looked solemn,

With her modest eyes cast down,

While just between her arching brows

Lurked such a pretty frown!

"You told me once," she whispered,

"That all men, yourself included,

But despised a bold, free woman,

Who her witching arts intruded."

"And yet, you said deceiver,

Here before my very sight,

With the dashing widow yonder

You've been flirting half the night;

Clasping tight her jewelled fingers

In your own—poor me forsaking!

Ah, who would be engaged, I pray,

And feel her true heart breaking?"

"Forgive me, oh! forgive me,

For, love, I am only thine!"

I cried humbly, "but you'll own, dear,

That the widow is divine?"

Pray let me introduce her."

And I leave my seat to find her,

While my darling's eyes are filling,

With the bitter tears that blind her!

All tears had dried and vanished,

When I brought the widow back;

But of proud disdain and dignity,

Indeed, there was no lack!

Then I, gently, softly bending,

Like a true, fond lover, kissed her;

While I whispered, "Grace, pray let me

Introduce you to—my sister!"

Have you heard a lonely song-bird

Trill a sweet triumphant lay?

Have you seen a cloudy morning

Lapse into a sunny day?

Such my darling's transformation,

As she clasped her arms about me,

Promising in sweet repentance,

That she ne'er again would doubt me.

M. A. K.

GEMS.

He who talks, sows; he who listens, reaps.

The wheels of fortune are constantly revolving, and the rich man to-day may be the poor man to-morrow. A majority of the rich men in our principal towns were once poor, and many who possessed their thousands are now poor.

How often it happens that in our relations with the people around us, we forgive them more readily for what they do, which they can help, than for what they are, which they cannot help!

The more and the greater are life's difficulties, the more honourable it is to carry off the victory. Man may be disappointed in his greatest hopes in life without on that account becoming unhappy.

Has any one wronged you? Be bravely revenged; slight it, and the work is begun; forgive it, 'tis finished. He is below himself who is not above an injury.

Suspicion is not less an enemy to virtue than to happiness; he that is always corrupt is naturally suspicious, and he that becomes suspicious will quickly be corrupt.

Three old soldiers of the First Empire recently held their annual banquet at the establishment Catelein,

in the Palais Royal, M. Belmontet in the chair. The traditional loaf of army bread was on the table, adorned with a branch—this time entirely budless—of the celebrated chestnut-tree of the 20 Mars. The assemblage was not numerous, as the final retreat sounds more loudly for these ancient warriors. Of the three thousand who were alive in 1852, scarcely a hundred remain. Toasts were drunk to the memory of the Great Emperor, to the Army of Austerlitz, to Marshal de M'Mahon, and to the resurrection of the glory of the country. The guests then separated with the usual farewell saying, "To our next meeting."

STATISTICS.

PUBLIC INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.—The Government balance-sheet for the year ended the 30th of September, 1873, and the 31st of December, 1873, has just been presented in a Parliamentary Paper. The total income for the year ended the 30th of September was 77,482,998*l.* 17*s.* 2*d.* The total expenditure was 75,202,230*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*, leaving an excess, after deducting the expenses of fortifications, 2,226,768*l.* 3*s.* 8*d.* In the year ended the 31st of December last the income was 77,712,676*l.* 15*s.* 8*d.*, and the expenditure 76,216,186*l.* 1*s.* 11*d.* After the expenses for fortifications, the excess was 1,496,490*l.* 13*s.* 9*d.* The balances in the Exchequer at the Bank of England and the Bank of Ireland on the 31st of December last were 3,983,633*l.* 13*s.* 10*d.*

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

PAIN IN THE EAR.—As soon as any soreness is felt in the ear, let three or four drops of the tincture of arnica be poured in, and the orifice be filled with a little cotton to exclude the air, and in a short time the uneasiness is forgotten. If the arnica be not resorted to until there is actual pain, then the cure may not be as speedy, but it is just as certain, although it may be necessary to repeat the operation. It is a sure preventive against gathering in the ear, which is the usual cause of ear-ache.

CHEAP VINEGAR.—Take a quantity of common potatoes, wash them until thoroughly clean, place them in a large vessel, and boil them until done. Drain off carefully the water that they were cooked in, straining it, if necessary, in order to remove every particle of the potato. Then put this potato-water into a jug or keg, which set near the stove, or in some place where it will be kept warm, and add one pound of sugar to about two and one-half gallons of the water, some hop-yeast, or a small portion of whisky. Let it stand three or four weeks, and you will have excellent vinegar, at a trifling cost per gallon.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The son of the Czarewitch and the sister of the Princess of Wales is a most beautiful boy. His portrait, which does not do him justice, is like one of the most exquisite of Sir Thomas Lawrence's child portraits. It is a head fit for a cherub.

PRIVATE letters from New York give glowing accounts of the marriage of Miss Grace Field, daughter of Mr. Cyrus Field, to Mr. Lindley, of that city. Fifteen hundred guests offered their congratulations to the bride and bridegroom, and the bridal presents are said to have been of the aggregate value of 100,000*l.*, or half a million of dollars.

PURE IRON.—Absolutely pure iron is said to have been prepared by a Russian chemist by means of the galvanic battery. During the process a large quantity of hydrogen was disengaged from the ordinary iron used. The pure iron is a silver-white metal, very malleable and ductile, and as soft as to be readily cut with a pair of scissors. It oxidizes rapidly, and water is decomposed by it with the rapid absorption of oxygen.

The Paris chroniclers anticipate an early visit of their Royal and Imperial Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh to Paris, on which occasion they will be received with great pomp and ceremony by the Government of France. Brilliant fêtes will be given in their honour at Paris and Versailles, not less in splendour than those which took place at the visit of the Shah of Persia.

THE ROYAL SISTERS.—The Princess of Wales has been most careful to keep in the background since the Duchess of Edinburgh arrived, in order that the bride might have all the popular applause to herself. Just now she has plenty of it. The favourite occupation of the Londoners is to throng the Row in the afternoon, in order to see "the Edinburghs" drive past—the duchess sometimes wrapped in those splendid fox furs which her father gave her, and which rumour says are worth 4,000*l.*

CONTENTS.

	Page		Page
ADRIEN LEROY ...	577	THE MOON AND THE	597
WHEN FAR AWAY ...	580	WEATHER ...	597
KID GLOVES ...	580	A NEW CABLE SHIP ...	597
THE AUSTRALIAN FEVER ...	580	ELECTRO-SYMPATHETIC	598
TOES ...	580	CLOCKS ...	598
WAKEFULNESS ...	580	PACKETS ...	598
JOSEPHINE BEAUVILLIERS ...	581	SWEET REPENTANCE ...	599
LOSS OR GAIN ...	584	GENS ...	599
THE DURATION OF		STATISTICS ...	599
BRAIN IMPRESSIONS	585	HOUSEHOLD TREASURES	599
THE BLENKARNE INHERITANCE ...	588	MISCELLANEOUS ...	599
THE DOUBLE BONDAGE ...	589		
THE BLUE GEM IN THE GARDEN ...	592	THE DOUBLE BONDAGE, commenced in ...	564
THE ALBERT MEDAL ...	592	JOSEPHINE BEAUVILLIERS, commenced in ...	567
GIORGIO FIR ...	592	THE BLENKARNE INHERITANCE, commenced in ...	568
GEORGIE ...	593	ADRIEN LEROY commenced in ...	570
GEORGINA WILDS ...	596		
SCIENCE ...	597		
RHEUMATIC GOUT ...	597		

We can commend to the favourable notice of our musical readers the following songs, published by Mr. John Guest, of 52, Fenchurch Street, E.C.—“The City Clerk” (comic song), and “I Don’t Know Which to Choose” (lady’s song). We were not, however, very favourably impressed with the music of the latter, and the words appear to have been carelessly printed. For instance, “And as their temper loss” should be “And so,” etc. We do not like the third verse, the meaning of the second line is obscure and there is a misprint in the third. “It’s Not At All Like Me.” The one idea embodied in this “humorous” song has, we think, often done duty before, but it may not be less acceptable to many on that account. “Pretty Jessie” (song and chorus sung by the Christy Minstrels). “So sing me the old songs of when I was a lad” is simple and pretty. “The Good Bye Song Ago” is in our judgment an excellent ballad and deserves to be a public favourite. “I Love to Sing the Dear Old Songs.” Three or four bars of “Home Sweet Home” are here introduced with appropriateness in the first verse, but their repetition in the second and third verses is not so effective. “Don’t Judge a Man by His Coat” ought to become very popular on account of both music and words. We have not for a long time seen a song of its kind that we liked so well. The same idea is to be met with in many other places—in “Give Me the Man of Honest Heart,” for instance—but it is here presented in such an acceptable form that its repetition is welcome.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A FLOUNDER.—Try the bicarbonate of soda.
T. J. W.—The handwriting is excellent. To use a well-known phrase, it is like “copperplate.”
S. S. S.—English mayors, numbering 145, accompanied by their wives, visited Brussels, February 21, 1870.

EDIT.—Your letter should be written on a sheet of paper distinct from that on which your friend has written.

G. C. S.—Your “Welcome” is written with some ability and with an amiable enthusiasm. But it is sadly deficient in finish, and must be thrown aside on that account.

MISS L. (Liverpool).—You have simply to write and propound your question with as much precision as possible; and in due course you will, in all probability, find your questions answered and your wishes complied with.

FAIRY.—1. Upon consulting the list of “Sailings,” in the shipping intelligence of the date contained in your letter we find that no vessel sailed for New Zealand on the day named. 2. The colour of the hair is light brown. 3. Love finds out the way.

TWO BELLES OF EMM.—Salts of tartar will soften hard water, but you must be very cautious and careful as to quantity. As much of the salts as will lie upon a sixpence will suffice to soften a gallon of water. The wash for the teeth described by you is considered very good.

W. O.—We are rather sceptical as to the ability of any compound to restore gray hair to the colour it bore before it turned gray. Of course it can be dyed, but that is another thing, and there are various dyes of both the light and dark shades.

LILIAN.—The growth of the hair is best promoted by keeping the body in good health. The hands may be whitened by anointing them with glycerine before retiring to rest and wearing gloves through the night. Your handwriting is very good.

H. M. S.—We think it probable that you will find such an institution if you inquire in the locality designated in your letter. You should order the back numbers of the LONDON READER through the agent of whom you usually purchase your weekly copy.

LEZIE.—You must search the registry of the Court of Probate in London or the registry of the same court situated in that district in which the testator died. A small fee is payable before search and a larger fee if a copy of the will is required.

RUFUS.—1. The handwriting is excellent. 2. With regard to the other question contained in your letter, we may say that the only safe plan is to consult a surgeon, who has the opportunity of inspecting the parts affected. A written description of a physical defect, unless made by a skilled hand, often misleads.

SERLINA.—There is an English translation of Madame De Staël’s novel of “Corinne,” but we are inclined to think that it is now out of print. Apply to some second-hand bookseller, who, we think, will readily procure you a copy. This book was the favourite companion of the Countess Guiccioli; and Lord Byron very naturally admired it.

X. Q. X.—The frequent sign of the Marquis of Granby refers to an amiable and distinguished English nobleman and general. John Manners, Marquis of Granby, was the eldest son of the Duke of Rutland, and commanded with

honour during the Seven Years War in Germany. After the peace of 1763 he retired into private life, greatly beloved by all ranks for his many virtues. He died in 1770, aged 50.

AGRICOLA II.—Special licenses to marry are very expensive, and cannot be obtained without great difficulty. The fees payable for such a license amount to about 50s. The parties who have obtained a special license to marry can be married at any place or time they may select, and are free from the ordinary restrictions of notice and residence.

R. and M. S.—The young ladies require better information about you than the mere announcement of your respective ages convey. The style of your note is not the most likely method by which the object of your desire can be attained. The affection of no young lady can be had for the asking; her suitor should always make his approaches with great consideration and care, while he has to do and suffer a great deal before the prize is won.

MOTHERLESS CARRIE.—1. The handwriting is very good. 2. The occupation would depend a great deal upon the opportunities that occur to you and upon your own capacity. It is impossible for a stranger to advise. 3. Suppose you try a soap. A lard and castor oil will darken the hair, it is true, but the mixture is most unpleasant to use and often has a prejudicial effect upon the health. 5. Your letter contains many orthographical errors.

Asp.—October 1, 1864, is the date of the great calamity at Erith, caused by the explosion of about 1,000 barrels of gunpowder, containing 100 lbs. each. The buildings of the Messrs. Hall were blown to dust, and the embankment in front thrown with great violence into the Thames. The explosion was heard and felt at Charing Cross, a distance of fifteen miles. Five men were known to have been killed on the spot, five others were missing, presumably killed, and three died after removal to Guy’s Hospital. Those seriously injured amounted to twelve. The coroner’s jury returned a verdict of “accidental death.”

BOBBY KATE (Knareborough).—We should say that the colour is not red, neither is it Auburn; it seems rather to be a mixture of medium shaded brown and red, the brown greatly preponderating. A lotion for freckles can be compounded thus: Put two spoonfuls of sweet cream into half a pint of new milk, squeeze into this the juice of a lemon, add half a glass of good brandy, a little alum and loaf sugar; boil the whole, skim well, and when cool bottle for use.

EVENING.

The shadows of evening have fallen,
All nature from labour has ceased;
The heavens are bright with the planets
That rise in the beautiful east.

Luna, look down on us mortals below,
Smile for us as in southern land;
Beam brightly for friend or foe,
Guard earth with your heavenly hand.

Little stars, keep vigil with moon;
Shine for you through the thrones in the sky.
Venus, evening star, shining so soon,
Keep your sweet face ever nigh. W. F. P.

COUNTRY READER.—Albeit you may be poor, you will never find a surgeon turn a deaf ear to a necessitous case. If it should so happen that his hands are too full to attend personally to you, he will direct you to some institution where you will not fail to get such relief as he is given you. Mere book-knowledge, however much it may inform the mind, can never take the place of that mechanical trained skill which has been acquired by a surgeon as the consequence of a good deal of study and constant practice.

J. B. S.—A regulated diet and sufficient exercise are the chief means by which the appearances complained of can be removed. High-seasoned meats and strong liquors should especially be avoided. As an external specific the following lotion can be recommended: Crush one ounce of sulphur and pour over it one quart of boiling water. Allow it to infuse for twenty-four hours, then bottle for use. Apply this lotion to the face three times a day for a few weeks. 2. Your handwriting is remarkably good.

THE MISSES Q.—We do not answer correspondents by post. You can obtain a copy of your relative’s will on application either to the principal registry of the Court of Probate in London or to the registry of that district of the court in which the testator died. The expense is somewhat dependent upon the length of the document; the cost of the copy of a will which is contained within an ordinary sheet of foolscap paper would probably not exceed five shillings, which sum would include the office fees as well as the copyist’s charge.

MARIA.—Let us first dispose of the prosaic question, pen, and ink with which you wrote were at fault, otherwise the writing, especially if it had been a little more condensed, would have approached that style which is considered elegant. Now as to the portrait. Do you really wish us to give an opinion on the subject? How angry you will be with us, for whatever the frequent scrutiny with which we have contemplated the carte may inspire us to say. First of all, and in reply to your direct question, the face is certainly not a bold one. But neither is it a soft face, it is rather pretty than handsome, and more intelligent than either, it betokens firmness, great intellectual power, and abundant energy, it has the ability to discern and to decide, and possesses withal a good share of brightness and cheerfulness. There is, too, an indication that its owner has all those qualities indicated by that nondescript term “a good heart,” but such a heart as is also influenced by judgment and discretion. A heart likewise that would take a man a long time to win, and to the gaining of which no one should ever dare to aspire who is not at least as gifted as its owner.

CECIL.—The capacities of men are so widely varied that to say that what has been accomplished by one man can necessarily be accomplished by another is to make an assertion that is obviously fallacious. A may be able to do better and more profitable works than B, but he may be utterly incapacitated from surmounting the precise kind of difficulty that B has overcome; and when C is able to tackle B on his own ground, to C may be

awarded the same position minus the laurels that B obtained. The idiosyncrasies of any man who passes an examination as one of the first three must be different from those of the man who is placed fifth on the same list. And yet, loosely speaking, they have each done the same thing, that is they have passed the same examination. Of course the proposition “Because one man has made a fortune, therefore another man may make a fortune,” is good as far as it goes, but that is a widely different proposition from the following: “Because Raphael has painted pictures which rank among the chef d’œuvres of that particular art, therefore a young friend of mine, who has just commenced drawing from the life, will be equally famous,” or, “because John Smyth has made 20,000l. by specialising upon horse-racing, therefore Tom Styles is able to do the same.” Both these latter propositions are manifestly absurd.

LALRA, twenty-four, domesticated, considered good looking, and would make a loving wife, would like to correspond with a gentleman holding a good position.

G. G., twenty-three, 5ft. 6in., blue eyes, fair complexion, and has a business of his own. Respondent must be good tempered, loving, fond of home, and have a little money.

FLOHA would like to correspond with a gentleman in the Royal Navy. Respondent must be tall, dark, of a loving disposition, and not over the age of twenty-eight.

DOLPHIN STRIKER, twenty-two, a seaman in the Royal Navy, 5ft. 2in., and has light-brown hair, wishes to correspond with a young lady about twenty, who is domesticated, and fond of children.

GIRY QUEER, twenty, tall, dark curly hair, dark eyes, of a loving disposition, and has a weekly income. Respondent must be tall, about twenty-two, loving, and fond of home; a mechanic preferred.

LILIAN, seventeen, fair complexion, blue eyes, dark-brown hair, considered pretty, wishes to correspond with a gentleman who must be good looking, have a dark complexion, and be fond of singing and dancing.

VIOLAT, seventeen, fair complexion, blue eyes, golden hair, and considered pretty, desires to correspond with a gentleman who is good looking, has a dark complexion, and is fond of singing and dancing.

FLYING BOON, twenty-two, fair complexion, and a seaman in the Royal Navy, wishes to correspond with a pretty young lady about the same age, who has a loving disposition, and is very fond of children.

MAR, seventeen, fair complexion, medium height, dark-brown hair, blue eyes, and considered pretty. Respondent must be of fair complexion, affectionate, and fond of home; a clerk preferred.

ELIZA W. and EMMA N., both eighteen, fair, and dress-makers. “Eliza” short, and fond of music and dancing. “Emma” medium height, also fond of music. Respondents must be of medium height, dark and musical, and sailors in the navy preferred.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

B. H. is responded to by—“Sit S.” medium height, good looking, and is of a loving disposition.

LOVELY JAMES by—“Annie W.” who thinks that she would suit him nicely.

STRATS OF DOVER by—“Lily,” twenty, tall, fair, pretty, a splendid dancer, fond of home and a kind husband.

M. A. S. by—“Mary M.” affectionate, fond of home, and a good housekeeper.

COURTESY by—“A. A.” twenty-one, medium height, fair, blue eyes, has literary tastes, is a good mimic, and is respectfully connected.

HAPPY JOE by—“A Farmer’s Daughter,” twenty-one, brown hair and eyes, domesticated, and would make a good wife.

A TRADESMAN by—“Lonely Annie,” who thinks she quite answers his description, and would make him a loving wife.

TRADESMAN’S DAUGHTER by—“Ralph,” twenty-six, 5ft. 9in., fair complexion, a tradesman in a good position, able to fulfil the requirements of the advertiser.

REGINALD K. and HAPPY CHARLEY by—“Blanche” and “Alice,” who are both good looking, and of musical tastes.

LOVELY ANNIE by—“Crest of the Wave,” 5ft. 9in., dark complexion, considered good looking, of a loving disposition, and thinks that he answers to her expressed desire.

REGINALD K. by—“Emily,” who answers to his description. She is nineteen, dark, fond of home and music, is a very good dancer, is considered pretty, and has 300l. a year.

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London: Published for the Proprietor, at 334, Strand, by G. A. SMITH.